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COMMONWEAL

EDUCATION ISSUE

CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: What Happened ?
Kenneth L. Woodward
ALL IS NOT LOST (the Class of '96): Michael J. Hunt
SCHOOLS WORTHY OF KIDS: Patrick F. Kelly
53 MILLION STINGY CATHOLICS: Joseph Claude Harris
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BOOKS

EDWARD McGLYNN GAFFNEY: Exiles from Eden
CARL L. BANKSTON III: Power & persuasion in late antiquity
LEE SIEGEL: Double agent / Politics by other means
R. BRUCE DOUGLASS: What it means to be an American
RISTOPHER F. KOLLER: If I were a rich man could I buy a pancreas ?
BETH DUFRESNE: Cry me a river

and much, much more

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CORRESPONDENCE

Wondrous to behold!

San Francisco, Calif.

To the Editors: The age of miracles has not ended. *Commonweal* accuses the *New York Times* of anti-Catholicism ["Some News Doesn't Fit," March 12].

Congratulations!

(MOST REV.) MARK J. HURLEY

The writer is the retired bishop of the diocese of Santa Rosa.

Carlin quit too soon

New Orleans, La.

To the Editors: As one who has written a half-dozen articles on the same topic, I plunged into David R. Carlin, Jr.'s column on the identity crisis of Catholic colleges [February 12] with enthusiasm and high expectations—the way I plunge into each new semester.

Carlin's description of the transition from the era of the ghetto to the era of integration is as good a brief review as I've read. But when we came to the part where I expected him to offer a formula on how we could remain distinctively Catholic—presuming for the moment that we should—he runs out of either space or ideas. By answering his question with another question, he implies that there is no role left for creative leadership within the American Catholic community to forge at least a few institutions that would do for higher education what *Commonweal* does for the American religious and political dialogue: that is, be both clearly Catholic and intellectually respectable.

Last year, partly for the exercise, I wrote a novel about Catholic higher education. And I have just written a very short reminiscence to be published in the 75th anniversary issue of the Fordham student newspaper, the *Ram*. Rereading both, I'm struck by the prevalent images of death and fire. Maybe we've missed our chance to adapt to the new era and remain vital at the same time. Remember the *Commonweal* and *America* articles in the sixties calling for consolidation, for a few really excellent schools? Maybe we're going to just let things "burn down," and maybe there'll be someone left who wants to start fresh. And maybe Carlin should try again.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J.

The writer, formerly an associate editor of Commonweal, *teaches in the department of communications, Loyala University, New Orleans.*

Bigotry is no myth

Baltimore, Md.

To the Editors: David R. Carlin, Jr., writes on behalf of those "whose opposition to homosexual conduct is religiously based" ["They Call Themselves Liberals," February 26]. Carlin is outraged that anyone, especially *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, should regard such opposition as bigotry.

Lewis doesn't need me to defend him, but Carlin is hardly persuasive in his indictment. Writing of those believers, Carlin says that "they fear giving the okay to homosexuality will open the door wider to lying, stealing, cheating, violence, etc., not to mention other forms of sexual misconduct."

Well, now, that certainly sounds like bigotry to me. It is preposterous, irrational, and spiteful nonsense. And it is dangerous. This is precisely the bigotry that has led to an epidemic of gay-bashing, as George Anderson reports in the same issue ["People Are Getting Hurt"].

That such beliefs are religiously based makes no difference, nor is it surprising. Some of the most dreadful violations of human rights in history—toward blacks, Jews, and other minorities—were committed by people whose beliefs were religiously based.

I am a liberal, but I am not one who holds that "religious traditionalists are to be held in disdain." I do believe, however, that gays and lesbians suffer greatly as a result of widespread bigotry. Moreover, there is a Christian imperative to redress that injustice. We would welcome Mr. Carlin's passion in this cause.

THOMAS HIGGINS

Gain & loss for gays

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: As a gay male I am profoundly ambivalent about the whole issue of the acceptance of gay lifestyles. On the one hand, the argument or assumption that gays cannot be as devoted as the next guy to family, friends, church, and state strikes me as laughable. Granted the evidence is "anecdotal" and "nonscientific," if not self-serving, but would it help if I bared my soul and those of my friends, trotted out my merit badges to certify my "normalcy," the sheer ordinariness of my interests and values? "We are here, we are everywhere," as the saying goes: sinners and saints, plumbers and priests, theologians and (yes, in my case) editors of theologians. Spare me from having to resurrect that old chestnut, "When you prick us, do we not bleed?"

On the other hand, I relish the difference, the "specialness," that being gay has hitherto meant, the association, however unmerited, with all the great (their name is legion) and even nefarious (their

(Continued on page 42)

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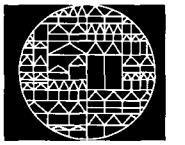

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Only cohere

Americans generally agree that something substantial must be done, and fast, about the deficit, the health-care system, and jobs. But there is a close runner-up in the Great Anxiety Sweepstakes: the deterioration of education at all levels.

The problems are manifold and pressing: whole rural school districts faced with shutdowns for lack of funds; inner-city primary and secondary schools rocked by random violence and dogged by low test scores and high dropout rates; a loss of coherence in higher education coupled with skyrocketing tuition costs: in the past decade, a 120 percent tuition increase in public institutions and 150 percent in private.

In his State of the Union address, President Bill Clinton called for greater responsibility on the part of students, teachers, parents, and schools. He reminded Congress that "an average eighteen-year-old today will change jobs seven times in a lifetime" and therefore "lifelong learning" must become the goal of all Americans. Together, business, education, and government should develop apprenticeship programs, and a national service program should be initiated that would make college loans available to young Americans but challenge them to give something back to their country.

Worthy policy goals to be sure. A functioning democracy depends on the ability of its citizenry to involve themselves intelligently in the task of government. But just as important for democracy's well-being is education's capacity to draw into the social process those segments of society otherwise or previously excluded which help to regenerate it. It is a truism to say that education empowers; in fact, it does much more. Paul Kennedy notes in *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (Random House), that there is an astounding correlation among the rise in literacy, Gross National Product, and life-expectancy rates: as a nation's educational level advances, so does its overall quality of life.

In the last thirty years, U.S. higher education has shown an organic-like capacity to adapt and include. In 1960, only 37 percent of higher-education students were women and only 4 percent were from minorities. By 1988, those figures had shifted dramatically: women made up 54 percent of the total and minorities 18 percent. According to Francis Oakley (*Community of Learning*, Oxford University Press), U.S. higher education—with its decentralization, its combination of public and private institutions, and its extraordinary responsiveness to shifting social needs—has proven to be remarkably effective in widening the circle of inclusion.

But inclusion does not guarantee cohesion. Oakley sees a future clouded by tendencies toward heightened academic specialization, diminished interest in the liberal arts, and the incoherence of "cafeteria counter" curriculums. "I have the uneasy sense," he writes, "that many of our students are fated to...maneuver among radically divergent theories of knowledge without being fully conscious of doing so,

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and without getting adequate help in the process." To help remedy this situation, Oakley calls for a greater measure of coherence in the undergraduate curriculum, and a pedagogy that will build-in the great "interpretive disagreements and ideological conflicts" of the times in an atmosphere distinguished for its "openness, its rationality, its civility, its generosity of spirit."

But in a society already deeply fractured by struggles over power, wealth, and knowledge, not to mention over interpretations of freedom and responsibility, what can assure such civility and generosity of spirit?

In his review of Mark R. Schwehn's *Exiles from Eden* (p. 26), Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr. argues that only by reappropriating spiritual values such as humility, self-denial, charity, friendship, and justice—values that, Schwehn argues, best flourish within the great religious traditions—will the conversation among competing and sometimes rival interests be at all achievable. And, as if echoing Kenneth L. Woodward's article on the decline of Catholic higher education (p. 13), Gaffney says recovering a sense of purpose and vocation is especially urgent at a time when Catholic colleges and universities have "experienced a failure of nerve or a loss of rootedness in their religious traditions."

Patrick F. Kelly points out (also in this issue, p.6) that Catholic education is particularly vital today *where it is most endangered*: on the primary and secondary levels in our inner cities. His article underscores findings of a 1989 Carnegie Corporation study on preparing American youngsters for the twenty-first century. That study called for smaller schools where students would work together, volunteer in the community, and be assigned an adult adviser with "the time to talk with students." Inner-city Catholic schools such as Mr. Kelly's in the South Bronx provide some of these and give their charges a sense of belonging that enhances their ability to learn. But all of this is built around the fundamental values Catholic schools seek to transmit, values based on the Catholic religious heritage.

It was Franz Rosenzweig (d. 1929), the great teacher of Judaism in the modern secular world, who convinced Jews that if they were to maintain their tradition, "a new learning" had to be born. Rosenzweig directed the Free Jewish House of Learning in Frankfurt, which became a model for Jewish adult education. It was premised on the reawakening of Judaism as a spiritual power ("the pivot of our lives"), and combined study, service, and worship. Only with such a program, thought Rosenzweig, would Judaism once again become the source of a living context capable of revitalizing Jewish culture.

Today, such a challenge faces Catholicism in general and Catholic education in particular. The fruits of renewal in Catholic education will be felt not only in the Catholic community, however, but as Mr. Kelly rightly points out, in the whole society.

Another Kelley—Virginia, formerly of Hot Springs, Arkansas—has recently made that point. She told the *Wall Street Journal* (January 6, 1993), that in 1953 she enrolled her seven-year-old son, Bill, in the second grade at Saint John's Catholic School because it was such a fine school: "I will never forget the nuns for as long as I live for giving him such a good start," she says. Things have changed. Today, as Mr. Kelly from the Bronx would know, Bill Clinton would have lay teachers. He would still get a good start.

Claire Huchet-Bishop

Long a valued friend and generous supporter of *Commonweal*, Claire Huchet-Bishop died in Paris on March 11, at the age of 94. She was the widow of the distinguished concert pianist, Frank Bishop, who died in 1944 as a result of an auto accident.

Claire's substantial collaboration with *Commonweal* is a colorful story. It all began in 1940 with the first of an extensive series of book reviews which ran uninterrupted for a number of the magazine's weekly issues, all without monetary compensation on our part. Soon afterward we started publishing what turned out to be an impressive variety of her social, religious, and literary articles and reviews stretching over many years (at our meager authors' rates). But we happily did better by Claire Bishop when she served as our Children's Book Editor from 1952 to 1964.

Over the years, in this country and in her beloved France, Claire rang up a remarkable array of achievements. In 1924 she founded *L'Heure Joyeuse*, the first library for children in France, while in the 1930s, she was in charge of the children's reading room at the New York Public Library. Claire was also the author of some thirty books for both children and adults, including works which won her a number of important literary and spiritual awards and citations.

But, in a sense, I believe that all these pale before Claire Bishop's valiant and tireless struggle against Christian anti-Semitism. Although she was frail of health, this great cause was the impassioning motivation of her extremely active later years. Anti-Semitic references in French, Spanish, and Italian textbooks were removed as the result of her efforts. Thanks in part to her *How Catholics Look at Jews* (Paulist Press, 1974), so were anti-Semitic passages in Catholic catechisms.

Claire urged the American Jewish Committee to press the Catholic church for reform in this matter at Vatican Council II. And she served as president of the International Council of Christians and Jews and of the Jewish-Christian Fellowship in France.

No wonder it has been a cherished privilege for me to have long known and admired Claire Bishop in person.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN

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BLOODY PENSACOLA

There can be no way to justify, defend, mitigate, or excuse the shooting of Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida. Killing to save the lives of the unborn is still murder. As Helen Alvare, director of the NCCB's prolife office, put it, "killing in the name of prolife makes a mockery of the prolife cause."

Unfortunately, the murder of Dr. Gunn was an act of violence waiting to happen, and neither the church nor the mainstream prolife movement has fully come to grips with that fact. They have tolerated, and in some cases fostered, a rhetoric and imagery about killing babies that achieve stark simplicity at the cost of overlooking much of what makes abortion the morally embattled issue that it is. First, the moral status of the unborn, and the right of the fetus to equal protection under the law, are simply not self-evident to everyone in the same way as are the rights of Dr. Gunn, or of any woman. Second, on the basis of this ambiguity, abortion has been rendered legal and protected by the same constitutional system that, for all its imperfections, is the safeguard for all our rights and the only likely means for ever reversing the abortion status quo.

By ignoring these complexities in its workaday vocabulary, the prolife movement disarms itself before groups such as Operation Rescue and Rescue America that drive a simplified argument about "killing babies" to its logical extremes. "Rescue" groups disrupt and destroy clinics, intimidate clinic personnel, and harass women arriving at clinics. This is nothing but vigilantism. The defense of such actions—that they stop baby killing and stop the work of "baby killers"—slides naturally into the kind of justification for even further violence that a few of their spokesmen toyed with in the case of Dr. Gunn.

Out of a misplaced sense of solidarity, the mainstream prolife movement has refused to take a clear distance from such groups, who also often undermine their concern for the unborn by expressing a virulent animosity toward all but the most traditional of women. It was a pity, for example, that nowhere did this topic emerge on the agenda of a recent conference of Catholic intellectuals at Saint Louis University on abortion and public policy. Instead, in mounting logically impressive arguments against the Supreme Court's abortion rulings, some of the participants came perilously close to saying that Dr. Gunn's killer had a good case.

The logic and policy agenda of the consistent ethic of life offers the most serious and solid ground on which to defend the life of the unborn. Its capacious definition of whom to include among the living (everyone) and its generous reading of what it means to favor the lives of the unborn and the condemned, the dying, the poor, the vulnerable, along with the lives of the whole and the hearty, implicitly recognizes the social nature of the human person and the social solidarity that sustains its maintenance.

Preserving this web of responsibility, we believe, is what will finally reduce the numbers of abortions along with the violence done to children, women, and men by poverty, drugs, and unemployment. Unfortunately, not all prolife advocates have embraced the consistent ethic. The time is overdue for drawing some clear lines.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

SODOM & BEGORRA

IT RAINED ON THE PARADE

The Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO) protesters, more than 200 of them, were arrested about an hour before the Saint Patrick's Day Parade began. The demonstrators marched north on Fifth Avenue in the rain only to be stopped by a line of police at 44th Street. I didn't see any of that. By the time I got to 50th and Fifth, just outside Saint Patrick's Cathedral, the demonstration was over.

It was a wet, cold day, gray and uncomfortable, somewhat in keeping with the dreary controversy about explicit homosexual participation in the parade. Initially the city awarded the parade permit to an "inclusive" group that would have permitted ILGO to march with its own banner. But that decision was voided, and the parade's traditional sponsors, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, were not compelled to include the ILGO contingent.

On this narrow legal point even the ACLU and the *New York Times* editorial page grudgingly agreed with the Hibernians and New York's Cardinal John O'Connor: the parade, held in honor if not in imitation of a Catholic saint, was largely a religious celebration. The state—in this case New York City and its mayor—had no right dictating who should or should not be included. For government to intrude upon such private decisions would restrict "free expression" and freedom of association, said the *Times*, and "play havoc with the Constitution."

So, not to put too fine a point on it, the *Times,* along with nearly every liberal columnist and politician in the city, smugly concluded that if the Hibernians, Cardinal O'Connor, and the Catholic community wanted to be troglodytes and bigots, no one could stop them. It just didn't seem very Christian, remarked the more supercilious.

Such lofty sentiments, soaked in arsenic, rarely persuade. Reasonable and well-meaning people can disagree, I think, about the public status of homosexuality. But the effort to turn the Saint Patrick's Day parade into a celebration of "inclusion" is, I am sure, more a symptom of liberal individualism's misplaced ambition than its rightful regard for equality before the law.

So, it goes without saying, I did not find the parade a moral affront. Indeed, in principle I am a big fan of public rituals of almost any kind. Truth be told, however, this was my first Saint

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Patrick's Day parade. My initiation began when two smartly dressed policemen got on the subway at 66th Street. I admired the shine on their buttons and badges, the silk stripe running down their trousers. "O'Malley" and "Donovan" were the names on the brass nametags. I'm not kidding. Perhaps those are the names of every cop in New York, or at least I suspected as much by the end of the day.

In the parade itself, which got under way promptly at 11, the Police Department's Holy Name and Emerald societies took the lead. Cardinal O'Connor greeted the marchers from under a plastic tent on the steps of the cathedral. O'Connor was widely quoted the next day for a remark he made in his Saint Patrick's Day sermon. "Neither respectability nor political correctness is worth one comma in the Apostles' Creed," he said. I tend to agree with this, although I'm not sure exactly how countercultural a Saint Patrick's Day parade can be. If the parade wasn't respectable or politically correct, it nevertheless moved with the lethargy we associate with both. I must have watched for fifty minutes, but doubt if the marchers advanced more than ten blocks. The bagpipes of the Emerald Society, and the woeful countenances of two stately, but rain-bedraggled Irish Wolfhounds were the highlights. As for the music, there seemed to be an inordinate amount of the Marine Corps Hymn.

Among the spectators, green plastic leprechaun hats and small shamrock face-stickers were popular. If there was rowdiness I didn't see it, although various small groups of pasty-faced young men sauntered up and down the sidewalk eyeing equally pallid platoons of giggling young women. One tall, boorish fellow shouted, "Yeah, no fags," but this barbaric yelp elicited no response from the crowd. A somewhat more fearsome and boisterous band of young men included one skinhead in T-shirt and bermuda shorts who had a large green shamrock painted on the back of his frightfully simian skull. Must have been an impostor.

As time passed, and the parade stood still, the intensity of the rain increased. Shortly before noon I slipped into the cathedral to get dry. It was crowded, with a steady stream of people circumambulating past the devotional altars surrounding the nave. Business, for lack of a better word, was booming, with pockets of the prayerful dropping coins into the tin boxes conspicuously displayed at each altar. For inexplicable reasons, there was a particular logjam at the Altar of the Holy Face, better known as Saint Veronica's Veil.

Much to my surprise, the noon Mass proceeded as scheduled, despite the cacophony of band music wafting through the open transept doors. I was seated behind a broad-shouldered Haitian, who recited his responses in beautifully accented English. Behind me was a woman in a mink coat, a rosary held lightly in her hands. We—this most unremarked upon of democracies—recited the Gloria."For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ," hundreds mumbled.

This, when you think about, is a most peculiar petition—so monarchical and abject in tone. It can't be all that different from what the Egyptian faithful chanted in the temple of the Sun God 3,000 years ago. Yet here we were, modern New Yorkers all, praising in the most clamorous of settings the unfathomable justice of an omnipotent yet invisible God. Is there anything stranger than the tenacity of such aspirations in a culture so dedicated to the disenchantment of the world and the exaltation of the self? Who could not be struck by the baldly anachronistic nature of this gathering, by the preposterous claims of the Mass, by the statues and candles, the cavernous space reaching far above our heads, the priests scuttling down the aisles in their theatrical capes, or (most amusing of all) the meek attendants hurrying by with refreshment for the dignitaries, quartered off behind velvet ropes, reviewing the parade.

Need anyone feel excluded from all this? You can be excluded from the Century Club, from Wall Street, from Park Avenue, from Yale and Harvard and Greenwich, Connecticut. But from the one "Lord Most High"? From the Altar of the Holy Face! You might as well feel ignored by the sun or the stars—or on this day, by the rain. Though the democracy of the church demands something different from each of us, I suspect there is shelter here for all.

PAUL BAUMANN

REPORT FROM THE SOUTH BRONX

SCHOOLS WORTHY OF KIDS

SAINT ANGELA'S NEEDS HELP

Visualize a map of the United States and point to the area where excellent schools are most needed. Your metaphorical forefinger is probably resting on my building, Saint Angela Merici School, in the South Bronx. I'm the new principal.

Catholic education in the inner city is no longer a monolith: stern sisters backed by strong pastors and children of European descent. Today, the face of the Catholic presence in places like the South Bronx is of many colors and heritages. Here, the descendants of Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, all look to the church to provide an educational alternative in the nation's poorest congressional district.

The faiths of our kids are nearly as diverse as their skin tones. In my school, about six out of ten are baptized Catholics, and a smaller proportion attend weekly Mass. This makes some critics unhappy. Should the church invest such capital—economic and spiritual—on a population at best nominally Catholic? The parents and guardians of our students make great sacrifices to send these children to Catholic schools, in most cases covering 80 to 90 percent of our schools' operating costs. Yet last year alone, the Archdiocese of New York had to transfer over $20 million to cover the expenses of inner-city schools. By focusing on this aspect of the church's obligation to serve the poor, the archdiocese has been a blessing to my students and to tens of thousands of children all over the city. But the problem facing Cardinal John O'Connor, the arch-

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diocese, and the future of Catholic education in the South Bronx is still money.

It is sad, but we have a system of schools which is objectively superior to our public schools. This is not said to bash public schools or our dedicated colleagues who work in them. It is a statement of fact. More than a third of New York City public high school kids are not finishing school, and in some public elementary schools only 22 percent of the children are reading at grade level. When students are sitting in overcrowded classrooms receiving inadequate instruction while the schools' attention is focused on divisive social policy issues, the reason the schools exist is obviously not being met.

Our mission at Saint Angela's School is clear. We work to provide competence in basic academic skills in an open, Catholic environment. We believe that each child comes to us with the highest of recommendations: he or she is the image of God.

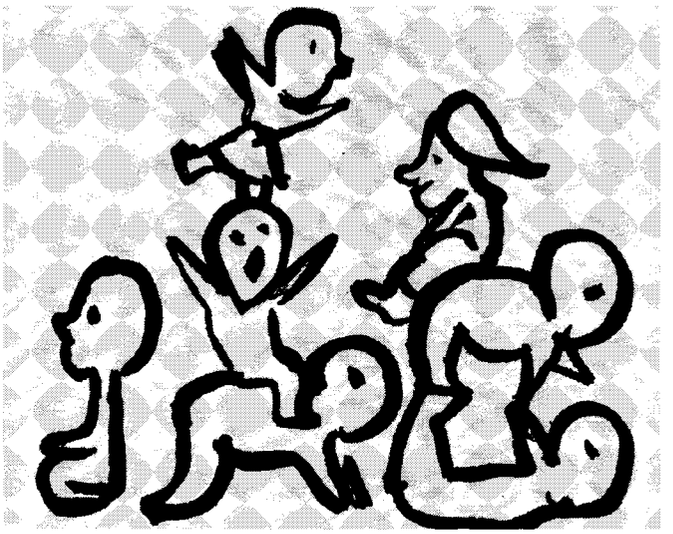
And, contrary to the weekly columns of Albert Shanker in the Sunday *New York Times*, we do not bounce children if they fail to memorize the *Memorare*. This year, out of 505 enrolled students, only one has been asked to leave my school, and this because he threatened violence against a classmate. I even referred him to another local Catholic school and offered to speak on his behalf with the school's principal. Fifteen other kids have left because of financial difficulties. I would have lost two more, but for scholarships, one provided by a parishioner and another by a stranger through the Partnership for Quality Education, whose advertisements appear regularly in the New York press. I know I'll lose more before I'm able to set up a stronger in-house scholarship program for these students.

New York City spends over $7,000 per pupil, while Catholic schools spend about $2,000. We provide better service at less than one-third the cost, and our families, many non-Catholic and many non-practicing Catholics, choose us over a fully subsidized state monopoly.

Vouchers would help, but it appears that, politically, they're a long way off. I'd like only 86 percent of the public subsidy dedicated to education—we can afford to pay the 14 percent of the instructional day apportioned to teaching religion. Some will object that Catholic culture infuses the whole school and therefore state aid would be supporting the promotion of religion. But I could argue that state money is equally infected with the secular culture pervasive in our public schools and that these public funds support that value system. But the chance of public money for my program is remote, so we are left to our own devices.

This fall, the superintendent, the vicar for education, and their support staffs met with all the principals of the archdiocese. They told us that our subsidies from the archdiocese will be reduced by 50 percent each year until they are no more. This was not surprising. The word has been out since the October 1987 stock market crash that the church had taken a beating in the market, and what was once available is gone.

It's well over five years since the crash and this is the first



fiscal year schools have seen their subsidies cut. For those of us in charge of inner-city Catholic schools, the heat is on. Now.

District Nine in the South Bronx is composed of six Catholic schools. Some of us are struggling for our lives, and all of us are fighting to keep our programs within the reach of our economically battered communities. To improve our programs and seek outside help, we've had a great many meetings and joined forces to form a cooperative, the Association for South Bronx Catholic Schools, Inc. (ASBCS). Each pastor has joined his principal in the process, dedicating time and money to the association. As far as I know, no other district in the archdiocese has tried this collegial model. The pastors' commitment to the ASBCS has led to archdiocesan approval for our work, and this is no small matter. The principals are another story. I am tempted to write about each of them. They are a fundamental reason for the success of Catholic education in the South Bronx, and a key factor in my decision to accept my appointment as principal. After only eight months, I'm already deeply in their debt.

But that's not the story. The story is this: first, local leaders of Catholic education are now responsible for the fate of their program. And second, the ASBCS presently educates over 3,000 inner-city children in neighborhoods most people don't want to get lost in. (Yes, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* burned in my parish.) What loss will it be to the church and to the city if our programs are forced to close? How many more children of the South Bronx are expendable?

Catholic education has always been subsidized. The sisters of the Order of Saint Ursula labored for more than eight decades at Saint Angela's School without being compensated materially for what they were worth. Up to the present, the archdiocese has provided the subsidy needed to (under)pay the salaries of our dedicated lay teachers. Those who received the service of Catholic education, subsidized first by members of religious orders and now by our lay teachers, have never been asked to fully contribute to this cause. You survived Catholic school? What have you done to contribute to the subsidized education

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you received? Well, I'm asking: For 3,000 children in the South Bronx, for Saint Angela's 492 kids. The service provided by Saint Angela's School is ecumenical in scope, citywide in the fruits of its positive results, national in its impact, and Catholic in its symbolic and real value.

Several members of Saint Angela's staff, including myself, have undergone training designed to strengthen our business sense, to secure and broaden our financial base, and to change our way of thinking about our status as a nonprofit institution. The Leadership Development Initiative (LDI), funded by the Milken Foundation, has provided the tools to move our program forward. The Milken Foundation is a non-Catholic foundation that has helped dozens of inner-city schools, Catholic and non-Catholic, to set up programs to insure fiscal and program health.

At Saint Angela's School, we are now actively seeking alumni and friends to help our children. A reunion is scheduled for the spring of 1994, to celebrate the school's ninetieth anniversary. Foundations are being researched. We're happy to act on behalf of our children, but anyone in the field of nonprofit development programs will tell you it takes years to secure a return on the investment.

Catholics now possess the highest per capita income of any group in the United States. As Andrew Greeley points out, however, Catholics, compared to non-Catholics, contribute a relatively tiny fraction of this bounty to our churches and schools. The bald fact is, Catholic schools in the inner city are the most visible, and arguably the most effective, instrument by which the church reaches the marginalized of American society. They are a tool for quiet evangelization, a sign of our solidarity with the dispossessed. It will not be to our credit, as stewards of the church's material and spiritual resources, if we allow Catholic education in the inner city to shrink and wither and grow less vital. Here, in the South Bronx, it means providing for schools such as Saint Angela's. PATRICK F. KELLY

Patrick F. Kelly has worked in Bronx Catholic schools since 1982 and was appointed principal of Saint Angela Merici School in September 1992.

REPORT ON THE COLLECTION BASKET

PENNIES FOR HEAVEN

CATHOLIC UNDERACHIEVERS

American Catholics have a lot of money. Yet from all reports the Catholic church in the United States is strapped for cash. Headlines tell the story: "Rising Costs, Low Contributions Spell Red Ink for U. S. Dioceses" (*National Catholic Reporter*, February 2, 1990); "Catholic Parishes Face Squeeze as Donations by Members Fall Off" (*Wall Street Journal,* January 8, 1990). Both articles speak of skyrocketing costs and stagnant revenues, a combination that is a fair definition of a fiscal fiasco. Yet American Catholics with an average 1991 household income of $41,044 are fiscal giants, albeit sleeping fiscal giants.

Average Catholic Household Gift by Geographic Region

New England/Mideast	$205.51
South	$304.56
Great Lakes	$309.73
Plains	$340.97
Mountains/Far West	$242.44
UNITED STATES	$280.15

All discussions of income begin with a measure of average income for American households. With 95.7 million households, the total 1991 American household income was $3.628 trillion. The Bureau of the Census estimates the 1991 average American household income at $37,922. Independent Sector, a Washington, D.C. think tank, in a study of giving and volunteering conducted by the Gallup Organization, reported respondents' 1991 income at $36,797. The congruity between Bureau of the Census and Independent Sector data makes the estimates of household income by denomination from the Independent Sector study a useful reference in establishing Catholic household income.

Catholic respondents to the Independent Sector research gave their 1991 household income as $40,903, a household income that was approximately 8 percent greater than the average for all Americans. This is similar to the 1990 Catholic household income of $40,435 reported by The National Survey of Religious Identification (a project of the The Graduate School of the City University of New York). Adjusted for average income growth, in 1991 the average Catholic household made $41,044. With approximately 18,193,790 households registered in Catholic parishes, that means Catholics made $746.7 billion during 1991, or 21 percent of the aggregate American household income.

It is commonplace in Catholic circles to lament the lackadaisical giving habits of members. And with good reason. The average Catholic household is a sleeping giant when it comes to putting money in the collection basket. I reviewed the actual contribution records of 329,757 registered Catholic households in 278 randomly selected parishes in forty states. During 1991, Catholics gave, on average, $280.15 to the Sunday collection. This varies by region [*see* table above].

The average Catholic donation of $280 represents .7 percent of household income for the average Catholic household. Catholics gave $5.096 billion in recorded contributions in the Sunday collection during 1991. This estimate is the result of multiplying the average donation of $280.15 by 18,193,790 Catholic households. The entire Sunday collection including anonymous cash donations for 1991 is estimated to be $5.479 billion. The 1992 edition of *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* estimates that Catholic households gave an average of

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$575 for all charitable contributions in 1991. Thus the total donations of 18 million Catholic households in 1991 amounted to $10.461 billion or 1.4 percent of household income.

Catholic giving at 1.4 percent of income is lower than virtually all Protestant denominations. Lutherans are about as fiscally blessed as Catholics with an average household income of $40,502. They gave 1.8 percent of household income to charity. Had Catholics matched that rate, their total contribution would have been $13.441 billion. Had Catholics only contributed at the rate of Lutherans, Catholic donations to religious charities would have realized an additional $1.877 billion. Presbyterians make somewhat more money than Catholics, with an average income of $2.333 and they give 2.1 percent to charity. Evangelical Protestants, Mormons, and Jews give substantially more to charity. The average gift to charity for all religions is 1.9 percent of household income. Catholics are dead last in the giving sweepstakes.

Catholic giving is .5 percent below the average for all households. Were Catholics to become simply average givers, Catholic donations to religious charities would climb by $2.333 billion. Clearly, a lot of the Catholic church's financial problems would be solved if Catholics were only a little more ordinary. JOSEPH CLAUDE HARRIS

Joseph Claude Harris is director of marketing for the Renton Coil Spring Company in Renton, Washington. This article is based on a Lilly-funded study "Estimate of Catholic Contributions to the Sunday Offertory Collection during 1991." Copies of the study are available from Joseph Claude Harris, 2610 38th Avenue S.W., Seattle, WA, 98126 ($12.50 prepaid, 106 pp.).

THE JOYS OF HOMEWORK

COUNT ON MOM

BUT DO IT YOURSELF

Leisurely lunches are a source of pleasure to old friends who share a common fund of memories. Many of our stories involve rueful admissions, as we acknowledge mistakes made in the years before our children grew up to be our friends. Since all of them turned out to be admirable persons in spite of their parents' errors, we are not heavily burdened with guilt. Still...

The discussion began with Florence, who blamed her problem on a television show called "I Remember Mama." Often she watched it with her children, marveling at Mama's competence and serenity. The series told stories about a first-generation Swedish family: Mama, her husband, and their three children. Mama was the star of the show: wise, loving, generous, and patient. The episodes were the stuff of everyday living in times gone by, Mama's wisdom triumphing over domestic crises, smoothing out the lives of those she loved, and all in a half-hour with time out for commercials.

Florence couldn't remember the plot of even one show, only "the comfort of Mama's answers and her solutions to whatever problems the script created that week." Actually, Florence told us, "I wanted to be Mama—at least some of the time. Mama never worried about 'self-realization.' She was content in her love for Papa and the children and she was sure that what she was doing was valuable—handing down sensible judgments, wiping the flour off her hands on her apron."

Not one of us could even make authentic Swedish meatballs. And so the talk moved on to another form of mothering: helping children with their homework, and becoming perhaps too deeply involved.

Natalie said she was eased into the role by the necessity of listening to the times-seven tables or altar-boy Latin. The part she played grew, however, as children increased in numbers and needs. "It started out," she recalls, "with looking over their writing assignments and making suggestions. That led to what was politely called revising. And that was followed by blatant ghost writing."

Elsie made much the same confession, but added some details. "As time went on," she said, "a couple of my older children would leave me assignments, written on file cards and propped against the sugar bowl. Oh, sometimes there were a few pages of desperate scrawled notes they had taken—to show their good will—and even book titles and page references I might find useful."

What peculiar impulse misguided us in those years? All of us were superannuated English majors; some had stayed with it long enough to get hooked on the smell of dust and old bindings in the stacks. Then, suddenly, we were knee-deep in daily demands of another order. We would have said, if you asked us, that we just wanted to be useful. We had never learned to make angelfood cake or currant jelly, or even to take up hems; we had to do what we knew something about, and that led down a slippery path to years of vicarious successes and dishonorable achievement.

Perhaps we didn't have enough "own-life" to occupy our minds. Confined to quarters by the times we lived in and the prevailing mores, we could sit at kitchen tables between meals and loads of laundry helping the children. Because the work at hand was forever incomplete, we may have liked the idea of finishing and handing in and getting a good grade for a job well done. Thus what began with a paragraph about somebody's summer vacation could lead in time to a substantial contribution toward someone else's graduate thesis.

Writing English papers for a brother away at college was the earliest evidence of Laura's bad habit. Although he was a bright boy and ultimately a successful broker, he hated those weekly theme assignments. "Besides," she recalls, "he wanted to make the football team and needed time to develop his lungs and leg muscles." Big sister could send him something he needed: not a box of chocolate chip cookies but five hundred words about Salinger's Frannie or Voltaire's *Candide* or the fate of the *Hindenburg*. By next Monday.

Ernestine claimed that at one time she may have been one of the worst offenders, until she learned, with some embar-

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rassment, the error of her ways. "Now," she says, "I am pleased if a grandchild calls long distance and asks, 'Who was Persephone's mother?' Or, 'What was the name of Orwell's first wife?' But I don't respond to anything more demanding. A child may call me from college or send a fax to my place of business from hers—the restaurant where she ekes out a poor student's living by making sandwiches between classes—but she's not going to get me to reread *The Great Gatsby* or tell what I know about the Harlem Renaissance (which isn't much, by the way)."

Ernestine explains that two events combined to cure her addiction. "Now and then," she tells us, "I would manage to publish a modest thing of my own, often a sharp piece with a let-me-out-of-here theme, but sometimes a pious defense of my life, a glorification of wifedom and mothering. Well, one of these self-congratulatory essays brought a cold response from a reader, a newspaper editor who was a woman. I remember the letter pretty well. She said, 'My children get around under their own power, on foot or by bus. I can't imagine carting a troop of Brownies to a museum. I'm interested in my children's progress and I'm glad that they seem to do their homework, but they have their assignments and I have mine.'"

Her words gave Ernestine pause. But not for long, because at this time two of her children were entering a national essay contest of patriotic significance. She was at hand with encouragement, advice, and the ultimate offer it was hard for one of them to refuse. Happily, this entry received an honorable mention. "We were all proud and happy," Ernestine admitted. "There were literally thousands of essayists in the contest, from all over the country."

Next day, another mail delivery. It brought good news about a trip to East Coast historical shrines, all expenses paid, plus a Rose Garden photo opportunity with the president of the United States. All this was won by the other child, the one who perversely insisted on personally writing, rewriting, typing, and mailing the entry that was awarded first prize.

"And from that day," Ernestine concluded, "I have confined myself to interested observation and friendly encouragement."

KATHARINE BYRNE

Katharine Byrne is a bagger at her church's food pantry.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

GIMME SHELTER

A HOUSE CAN BE A HOME

There was a quiet dignity to the letter shared with me by Jacqueline Dorfmann, chair of the board of Carrie Simon House, a shelter for homeless unwed mothers and their children here in Washington. The letter was from Sharon McIntosh, one of the young women who has found a home there.

"A few years ago," McIntosh writes, "I was sent here to the States from Jamaica in the hopes of going to school and accomplishing the 'American Dream.'" After graduation from high school in New York, she came to Washington to attend Howard University. "I was seventeen and alone here with no friends or relatives....Working two jobs and going to school was not an easy task, but I managed. That is, until the major company I was working for decided to relocate to another state. I was left without a job in a recession. My whole world felt as if it was caving in on me. Everything started going downhill because a month later I found out that I was six weeks pregnant, and if that wasn't enough, I had just received my last eviction notice....I stayed at Mt. Carmel House [a night shelter for women] for seven months, but that seemed like an eternity." Because Mt. Carmel House is a night shelter, during the days McIntosh had to find places where she could stay and get off her feet.

"Being in the streets all day and being pregnant are some of the days I'd like to forget."

When it was time for McIntosh to have her baby she knew she could not return to Mt. Carmel House because babies weren't allowed there. At shelters for mothers with babies she was turned away because she was not addicted and had not been abused. The only option left to her, it seemed, was to give up her baby for adoption.

"The day I left the hospital was most painful. I gave my child over to the pre-adoptive parents. No words can express the hurt from the pain that I felt....Then I was told about the Carrie Simon House. I started feeling hopeful again. I went and got my baby back. I stayed with a friend for a week until my interview.

"The day that I was interviewed and accepted at Carrie Simon House was one of the happiest days of my life...."

Now settled, McIntosh is working on her Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. She will work and save money until she can live independently. "Mrs. Dorfmann," she concludes, "once again I'd like to thank you for giving me the break I so badly needed to get my life back on track. Words simply cannot express my gratitude. My baby thanks you, too."

The members of the Washington Hebrew Congregation were moved to establish Carrie Simon House in response to a challenge posed by their rabbi, Joseph Weinberg: "What action can we take to reach out into the community and establish something—something tangible to benefit the needy, the homeless, the poor?"

They decided on a place for the homeless, says Mrs. Dorfmann, "but not a shelter." It had to be a home, a comfortable haven for young, unwed mothers *with* their babies, a place where they could receive constructive guidance, where "they would have an opportunity to learn skills to enable them to achieve independence." The congregation consulted with others working in the community: "Reverend Steinbruch from Luther Place, Jubilee's Bob

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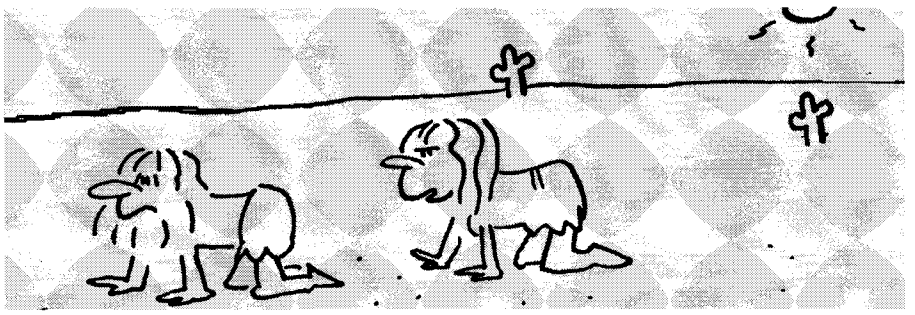

"Some secretary of housing and urban development you turned out to be!"

Boulter, the wonderful founders of Mary House, our neighbors from Saint Columba's, our friends from the Anne Frank House, the Sisters from Saint Anne's....We listened....We learned...."

Four years after it was decided upon, Carrie Simon House has provided a new start for fourteen young mothers and a caring environment for their babies. After the first year it was found that the house could best provide for only four mothers and their babies at a time. It may seem a small solution to the nation's problem with homelessness but it is an invaluable one.

Large shelters, especially night shelters, do little for the homeless except shield them very temporarily from the elements. It is for this reason that so many of the homeless prefer sleeping on heating grates, in packing boxes, under elevated highways, or in culverts. They feel safer, and when they return to the same place night after night there is at least a *place* that is theirs.

Night shelters are better than nothing, of course, but even the best exacerbate the homeless person's difficulties. They limit the person's stays and turn him or her back into the streets each day. A man or woman without a fixed address is not likely to qualify for a job; he or she has trouble receiving welfare, Social Security, or unemployment checks. And it takes little imagination to surmise what dangers a young and pregnant woman braves when she must wander city streets all day. Or when an old and frail man or woman must do so. Organized charities like those sponsored by the archdiocese here are, because of this, gradually changing their sponsored temporary shelters into transitional ones.

There is more hope for the homeless and those who care for them in the success of small shelters. These do not threaten neighborhoods; they make all the difference in the lives of those they take in because they are homes. I remember that when I saw Dorothy Day for the last time, she was urging the priests who were with us to find homes for the homeless in each parish. Every parish could support such an effort, she said.

The success of the Washington Hebrew Congregation in supporting Carrie Simon House would seem to bear her out. However, as Jacqueline Dorfmann points out, Washington Hebrew, a Reform congregation, is very large. It numbers 2,000 families among its members. And the investment in time, money, and effort is very significant—it takes a $45,000 contribution each year plus hours and hours of dedicated volunteer time from lawyers, counselors, social workers, teachers, etc. "The effect on our young people, though, is worth it," says Dorfmann. "By helping with Carrie Simon House they learn how to give."

It is worth remembering that not all the homeless need as much care as do the half-formed, half-educated young women at Carrie Simon. "The wonderful people at Mary House" mentioned earlier are Bill and Sharon Murphy, a Catholic-Jewish couple, and the parents of four children. Independently they bought a home, where they have taken in 170 different homeless families in the last twelve years and helped them break the cycle of poverty. The last couple they assisted had lived in a car for ten weeks after losing jobs and home (*Catholic Standard*, March 4, 1993). Isn't it possible that each parish could do as much?

As I write this the Washington, D.C. Department of Human Services has begun to enforce a law requiring families to leave shelters after ninety days. And families made homeless by the local joblessness are multiplying in the rural counties of the surrounding area. Many of us make contributions of money, food, and clothing; many volunteer their help. But we are very far from doing what must be done. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

SEARCHING FOR THE SOAP

COMING CLEAN ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY

As far as I can tell from news reports, the national debate about gays in the military has to do mainly with showers. If we can only solve the Great Shower Problem, we'll be able to let gays in.

The most obvious solution is to provide everyone with top-of-the-line bathing facilities, just like the generals have. I'll bet Colin Powell doesn't have to shower with the rest of the guys. I'll bet he never has to worry about one of the other Joint Chiefs snapping towels at him. Of course, if we let every sailor have a private shower and dressing room, we'll have to double the size of aircraft carriers.

Perhaps instead we could try a "custody of the eyes" solution. After all, if nuns were able to keep custody of the eyes for centuries whenever they went out in public, why can't soldiers do the same for a few minutes in the shower? The commander in chief could issue a strict order requiring all sailors and soldiers to look straight ahead on the horizontal plane while showering, just as they do on the parade ground. The trouble with this solution is that ac-

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cording to the latest research, 97 percent of bathers have the soap slip out of their hands at least once in the course of every shower. How will soldiers and sailors find their lost bar of soap while staring straight ahead? They could grope about with their feet, you say. But if another foot was touched, the question would arise as to whether this contact was sexually motivated. Was it an honest soap search? or was it homoerotic footsies?

Difficult as the problem is, I'm sure it will eventually be solved. If the Clinton administration has the brains needed to reduce the deficit and relieve the health-care crisis (and it had better have them), it will also be smart enough to solve the Great Shower Problem.

And once we've solved the Great Shower Problem, everyone will be ready to welcome gays with open arms. (I speak metaphorically of course.) Right?

Wrong.

Because the controversy in fact has relatively little to do with showers. Even if we came up with the perfect solution to the shower problem—a solution that not only protected privacy but made soldiers both cleaner and meaner—most of those who oppose letting gays in the military would still be opposed.

In large measure, I believe, this opposition is based on concern with the state of marriage and family in America. Many opponents are convinced (a) that permitting gays into the military is one more step in the process of granting full moral legitimacy to homosexual conduct, and (b) that granting this legitimacy is yet another move—of which there have been many in the last quarter century—in the direction of reducing the legitimacy of marriage and the two-parent family.

Think of the key steps in this process of relative delegitimizing of marriage and family during the last twenty-five years:

1. No-fault divorce laws.
2. High divorce rates.
3. Widespread acceptance of premarital sex, even among adolescents.
4. Ditto unmarried cohabitation.
5. Acceptance of high rates of out-of-wedlock births.
6. Approval, sometimes verging on enthusiasm, for the single-parent family.

(Before someone bites my head off for this last point, let me say that I am as familiar as he or she with many examples of magnificent children raised in single-parent families. But the exception does not alter the rule; to believe it does is to commit what the logicians call "the fallacy of converse accident." It remains true that children on average are better off in two-parent than in single-parent families.)

Thus the opponents argue: to give moral legitimacy to homosexuality is to strike one more blow, and a very severe one at that, against the already battered legitimacy of marriage and the nuclear family. Therefore resist.

Someone will say all this is nonsense. "Granting increased legitimacy to homosexuality, cohabitation, single-parenthood, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, etc., does not subtract one bit from the legitimacy of marriage and the two-parent family. This is not a zero-sum game, where giving to one requires taking from another. Legitimizing alternatives to marriage and the two-parent family no more reduces their legitimacy than granting equality to blacks delegitimizes whites."

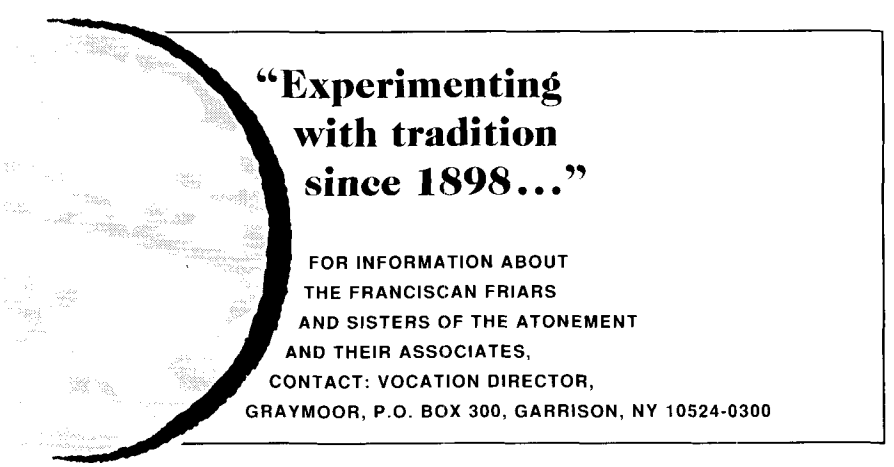
I hardly know what to say to someone who advances such an argument. I am baffled that anyone can be persuaded by such reasoning. But I realize there are people who are, vast numbers of people. My best suggestion is that they go home and reconsider what they are saying.

But let me try to answer anyway. Contrary to the objection, social norms are, in fact, involved in a zero-sum game. And marriage and family are normative institutions; hence they exist in a zero-sum environment. When we come to believe, for example, that robbing banks is an equally legitimate mode of getting money as honest hard work, can anyone deny that this belief undermines the legitimacy of honest hard work? As for blacks and whites: True, to say that blacks are equal to whites does not delegitimize whites; but it certainly delegitimizes the norm that says white is right; and delegitimizing that norm is precisely what was aimed at during the era of desegregation.

If this abstract answer isn't convincing, look around. Look at the world of marriage and family we have created in the last twenty-five years. Look at the out-of-wedlock birth rate: 25 percent of all births; more than 60 percent of black births; over 80 percent in some poor, black neighborhoods. Look at the "deadbeat dads," who father children and then take a hike, running away from the most fundamental of all human responsibilities, the duty of parents to care for their young. Look at the divorce rate: each year for about fifteen years now there has been one divorce for every two marriages. Then tell me this has nothing to do with reduced legitimacy of marriage and the two-parent family.

The most important long-term task facing any society is raising kids, getting them ready to take over the never-ending work of maintaining and improving the world. To date, the most effective mechanism the human race has invented for carrying out this child-rearing task is the married, two-parent, nuclear family. Yet for the past quarter century we Americans have been engaged in a relentless assault on this precious institution. We have behaved like Othello's base Indian, who threw away a pearl richer than all his tribe.

(Let's see...maybe each soldier could sit on a moving chair that would travel through an automatic car wash.) □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CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: WHAT HAPPENED?

A PARENT'S LAMENT

KENNETH L. WOODWARD

I am paid to write about the relationship between religion and culture and the culture of religion. I have also written about the family, at least what's left of it. Because of my job as a magazine writer, I also manage to visit college campuses with some irregularity, opportunities that allow me to talk not only with students but with faculty and administrators. All this makes me something of a participant-observer in higher education, though not in any way an expert. But then, as Soren Kierkegaard once remarked, "a roomful of experts is only a crowd."

I'd like to offer a view from outside the academy about the importance, indeed the transcendent importance, of a genuinely Catholic education. I have never regretted a moment of my own experience with Catholic education, from home through grade school, high school, and university. I have been and remain critical of the latter, but always from what I take to be a Catholic perspective. Which is to say whatever of value I have to offer others I owe to those mentors, who nurtured me in Catholic education and culture. They gave me my convictions and concerns. But count me among those who feel that there has been, on balance, a deterioration in education in general, and Catholic undergraduate education in particular.

When I was an undergraduate, we read Christopher Dawson and wondered with him what a Catholic culture might be for our own time and place. In our classes and in endless student discussion groups, we argued over what a Catholic university is and ought to be. Two years ago I attended a sesquicentennial conference at Notre Dame devoted to the work of one professor, Frank O'Malley, tenured without a doctorate, whose single-minded efforts to nurture Catholic intellectuals and to vivify Catholic culture and imagination profoundly influenced more than three decades of the university's best—or, at least, its most intellectually athletic—undergraduates. I was struck by two things: the great variety of professions represented among the returnees—not only professors and writers showed up but lawyers, doctors, and businessmen as well—and by the feeling of kinship, of bloodline, that we all shared despite the differences in our ages, our majors, and our experiences of Notre Dame.

But it wasn't just the bloodline running through Frank O'Malley that explained our commonality. As I came to see, almost everyone there had belonged to the Wranglers or the Bookmen, undergraduate discussion groups mentored by O'Malley which provided the fellowship and extracurricular stimulus for our making books and ideas, culture and its criticism, faith and intellect the substance and excitement of our undergraduate experience. These organizations no longer exist at Notre Dame, or at other Catholic campuses I have visited. And their disappearance, I maintain, says as much about the culture of undergraduate life today as those two other frequently noted causes: the decline in secondary education and the pervasiveness of television, mindless music, and other puerile cultural forces.

If a campus does not husband such undergraduate groups, where apprentice writers and thinkers and artists probe and experiment—and yes, posture and pose—if you do not have faculty who engender such non-classroom intellectual and spiritual

KENNETH L. WOODWARD *is a senior writer for* Newsweek *magazine. This article is adapted from a talk he gave at the University of Saint Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota.*

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communion, then you may have an educational community, possibly an academic community, but you most certainly do not have an intellectual community. Let me be clear: there cannot be a religious community on a Catholic campus that is not also intellectual, just as there cannot be an intellectual community on such a campus that is not also religious.

In some ways, of course, the undergraduate culture at Notre Dame in the fifties was also inbred. In different ways, it still is. Five years after graduating from the university, I wrote a long, rather angry article in which I cited the spiritual smugness that I felt affected the campus. It was a place, I said, where most students could feel secure in the extraordinary assurance that they are saved in this world as well as in the next. Salvation in this life through higher education and in the next by belonging, through no fault of their own, to the one true church.

The first attitude remains, unfortunately, a central dogma of the American way of life. But thank God the smugness of the second kind is no longer tenable. And efforts to recover it through an infusion of charismatic groups or recourse to automatic obedience to the Roman magisterium, as at the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, only compounds the smugness bred by an un-Catholic quest for spiritual certainty.

I find among some younger faculty at Catholic universities a different kind of smugness, one that looks down on preconciliar Catholicism. But where do they suppose that the reforms of Vatican II came from, other than from the minds of preconciliar Catholics? But there is another way to measure the American Catholicism of the fifties. Ask where today's public thinkers in the church came from, what intellectual and spiritual environments nurtured them in their youth. Where was Garry Wills as a student? In a seminary, of all places. So was Michael Novak. And afterwards, Novak, Daniel Callahan, and that most genial and erudite of American Catholic scholars, John T. Noonan, were together at Harvard. They were self-conscious Roman Catholics who formed their own intellectual community on that most religiously inhospitable campus. In all the discussions I hear of Catholic higher education, no one ever asks whether their college or university is host to such creative communities. Where is the ferment today? Can the women's study program, the feminist caucus, the black studies program, the charismatics, really claim to be heirs to such communities? Must gender, class, race, or, alternatively, the experience of speaking in tongues, be the only communal flags students can salute?

For the past year, I've been thinking about writing a book. The title would be: "College: Is It Worth It?" The answer would be "no." In it, I would acknowledge what the economists tell us, namely that people with college degrees earn more over their work life than those without them. But then I would look at what college education costs and ask whether parents—and, increasingly, students—get honest return on their investments of time and money: whether, in other words, there isn't a cheaper and better way to provide most students with what little they take away from their undergraduate experience.

What we have in undergraduate education is an expensive credentialing system. You pays your money and you gets your degree. Whether you also get an education is altogether another matter. This was true in my generation as well. But with one important difference: in the past, the trick was not only to get into college, but to stay in as well. Now it is almost impossible to flunk out.

Last year, I sat in a room with a collection of CEOs in New York, all of them Notre Dame alumni. Not my usual lunch time crowd. A representative of the university regaled us with the average SAT scores for that year's incoming freshmen, and smugly asked how many of us thought we could get into the university today. My answer was: Everyone present. What he failed to consider is that secondary education is not what it was in the past. For all the reasons which have been endlessly discussed, high school graduates are, on average, less well prepared than their parents were for higher education. And, I would submit, they are less well educated—except perhaps in engineering, and in some sciences—when they graduate from the university.

Undergraduate education is the way that this society has of warehousing the young because it cannot absorb them into the economy. They have no skills. But what skills do they possess after graduation? Robert Bellah, who, as distinguished professor of sociology at Berkeley, attracts an elite to his classes, tells me that a third of his students are illiterate. By that he means that they cannot read or write a complex English sentence. How many of today's students can approach an intellectual question from two or more perspectives, as Hobart, a wonderful liberal arts college, requires of its graduates? Above all, how many have been smitten by that intellectual eros—that love of learning for its own sake—which is supposed to animate the educated person no matter how she or he goes on to make a living?

When I roam about the campuses of elite colleges and universities today, let me tell you what I see: huge preserves where herds of adolescents are suspended, as if in a hammock, in a youth culture that provides a pleasing surrogate for real adulthood. Sociologists now verify what parents have for a long time recognized, namely, that today's young are taking longer to grow up. They are taking longer to establish careers and longer yet to marry. Character, competence, and commitment—the hallmarks of the adult personality—take longer to come by. In short, going to college is not a passage out of a puerile youth culture but its continuation on a higher level of freedom, self-indulgence, and self-absorption. Today's students need more structure, not less. More guidance, fewer guidance counselors. That guidance must come from a bracing campus culture which confronts entering students and challenges them to become other than what they are.

The young themselves are not to blame. They are the victims of a mindless, narcissistic, commercially driven youth culture created and tolerated by adults, parents as well as educators. My strong conviction is that no youngster aged eighteen or nineteen ought to be in college. Recognizing that they are taking longer to grow up, society ought to respond

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by mandating at least a year—preferably two—of public service before entering college. That service could be domestic or foreign, civilian or military. But the purpose would be to allow more time for emotional maturity before taking up the serious and increasingly expensive business of higher education.

I certainly would have learned more had I entered college a year or two later. It took me five semesters to catch the intellectual eros I mentioned earlier. But thanks to several professors who were also mentors, I did. In fact, it took three more years and as many universities before I felt that I had reached the point where I knew how to learn without the support of formal education. That is, I take it, one of the goals of higher education.

But again, there was a difference. For me, going to college represented a sharp break with adolescence. A threshold was crossed, a quest begun. I was initiated into a wider world to explore. Although Notre Dame was not as intellectually demanding as it should have been, there were enough good teachers, curious students, and stimulating student organizations to provide us with something to be as well as something to do.

Let me say what I think an undergraduate education is and how it ought to be approached. I believe any real undergraduate education ought to force the student to answer three related questions. What is worth doing? What would I like to do? What can I do, given my limitations?

As I suggested earlier, the classroom experience alone cannot answer these questions. But the first question—the question most students safely ignore—is what the liberal arts are all about. And the educated person is the one who answers the second and third questions in light of the first.

What is worth doing? Isn't this essentially Plato's question, "what is the good life?" But in order to answer that question with even a college graduate's sense of temporary satisfaction, a student must be initiated into that kind of personal, moral, intellectual, and imaginative quest which I take to be the purpose of a higher education. It is, as you can see, properly philosophical. It is also properly theological, and a college or a university which claims to be Catholic cannot do other than locate that quest within the community of faith.

Now it follows for me that higher vocational training, whatever its merits, is not education. Intruding father that I am, I told my own children that I would not pay for vocational courses. That is, I would not pay for business courses, training in journalism, and the like. Fortunately, none of them was interested in becoming an engineer.

My own idea of a liberal education is hardly unique. To me, all learning is a form of conversation. To take up the arts and sciences is to learn the grammar and concepts of a discipline—including mathematics. Just as we are all born into a language system not of our own choosing but without which we could not even think—so through education we are born again into an ongoing conversation on which cultures and civilizations depend. On the undergraduate level, much of this conversation rests of necessity with the past, with various traditions. So there it is: to be educated is to be able to converse—to converse with knowledge, with intellectual discernment, and with passion about the central ideas of our time, most of which are timeless. To be relevant, education must, in the proper sense, be irrelevant to the demands of the marketplace—and to much else that clamors for the student's attention these days. Yes, I'm an unreconstructed purist when it comes to undergraduate education, and I think Catholic colleges and universities ought to be too.

The problem, of course, is that those who teach the liberal arts are no longer certain what they are or how they ought to be taught. I am not unaware of the questions of multiculturalism and the like. On the matter of ethnic studies, my feeling is that any ethnic tradition which looks to the university for survival is already dead. Ethnicity is a folk phenomenon and is sustained in homes, neighborhoods, and the like, where ethnic patterns are properly preserved and extended. Nor am I convinced that in the humanities, the categories of race, class, and gender are the most important or revealing. They are certainly not the most intellectually interesting.

You would think that my second question—what would I like to do?—would be the one students most often ask themselves. But I fear that is not the case. I know of few students, especially the aggressively vocational, who pose this question

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seriously *while they are still in school*. Most graduates, especially in liberal arts, enter the outside world with at most a vague sense of what they will do there for a living. They speak of careers, but most often settle for what comes their way. The most disappointed are those who think that they can become, say, a journalist, simply by majoring in something called journalism. The fact is, very few people end up doing as a career what they majored in in college. And that is, as I have suggested, the way it ought to be.

How, then, should a student answer the second question while he or she is still a student? So long as they limit their educational experience to doing well in the classroom, they'll never be able to answer that question. To be sure, a professor in anthropology, for example, may stimulate a future anthropologist. But most students, I suspect, who discover a destiny—a vocation that chooses them—do so through extracurricular activities. But who even hears that quaint phrase today? It requires using the time outside the class to discover through activities what one likes to do and is good at. That's how journalists are born—and actors, and musicians, and salesmen and—most obvious of all—athletes. Yet for the mass of students, free time at college is not learning time. It is waste time or, for an increasing number of students, work time to help pay the cost of getting credentialed. Lucky indeed is the student who uses the opportunity college provides to experiment and thereby discover that sense of vocation without which no career is worthwhile.

If a student attends to the first two questions, then the third answers itself automatically. We discover what we can and cannot do by first reaching beyond ourselves, asking what is worth doing and what we would like to do. To be sure, most of us do not settle into our life's work until long after graduation. Those postgraduate years too, ought to be a time for discovery. But all too often, there is no search, no discovery. In college, all too often, life is on hold, adulthood can wait.

Too often parents who are serious Catholics and who have dutifully sacrificed to send their children to Catholic colleges and universities are disappointed in the results. They expected their children to graduate with an adult knowledge of and appreciation for their faith, and that expectation has not been realized. Yet without such knowledge and appreciation there is no point to Catholic higher education. Who is to blame?

Parents, first of all. A parent who does not follow up the bill-paying end of his or her responsibility with systematic scrutiny of which courses a student plans to take—and why—ought not to complain when Johnny graduates with a pastiche of credit hours and an undergraduate "major" he cares or knows little about. Parents also ought to monitor what their children at Catholic colleges are learning about their own religious tradition.

But the schools, too, must shoulder the blame. I am well aware of the problems facing Catholic educators. In the far distant fifties, you could assume a certain grasp of religious fundamentals on the part of entering students. The trick then was to transform the simplistic, clear-cut answers the students already had into questions, to provoke them into examining the deeper grounds of their superficial certitude. Today, professors of theology must do what high schools did in the past; acquaint their students with the fundamentals of their own religious tradition.

But young Catholics are not alone in their ignorance. We inhabit a religiously ignorant society, especially among those who orchestrate through the media what passes for cultured conversation. We live in a society in which some 90 percent of Americans say they believe in God. But few of them are able to summon intelligible, coherent reasons for what they believe or why. So too with Catholic colleges and universities. In the struggle to survive at any cost, many marginal schools have become marginally Catholic.

It's not enough to say that Saint X is a school that teaches values unless Saint X is prepared to locate those values in an explicitly Catholic tradition. Some schools locate their Catholic identity by pointing to all the volunteer hours students contribute in social service. Big deal. Justice and peace are fine. But what the Catholic tradition means by those words is rather different from what, say, a Buddhist means. And knowing the difference ought to be part of a Catholic higher education.

Theology alone cannot be the discipline that identifies the Catholic curriculum as Catholic. Nor is the addition of philosophy sufficient. It is not enough that a Catholic campus provide places to pray, sacraments to receive, important and countercultural as these activities are. The Catholic campus should be a community of faith where even non-Catholic students recognize the provenance of a long and lively religious tradition that informs the experience of learning.

For example, at Notre Dame these days it is possible to study feminist literature, African-American literature, even the Jewish-American novel. But you cannot find a course in Catholic literature. English majors there would never know that their own inherited culture had produced a body of literature which ranks among the great achievements of Western culture. Nor would they learn, unless they wandered into an aberrant theology elective, that Catholic writers and artists have addressed the substantive issues of human experience with a distinctive, though variegated, religious imagination. At Harvard University, Robert Coles has for years taught an exceedingly popular course called "The Literature of Christian Reflection" using Dostoevski and Pascal, Simone Weil and Georges Bernanos, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and Seamus Heaney, to awaken his academically privileged undergraduates to the spiritual and moral dimensions of human experience through literature. It is, in many respects, what O'Malley once did at Notre Dame. I wonder how many Catholic universities offer the same kind of course to their students?

Are Catholic university professors so defensive about their religious identity, so proud of their own doctoral credentials, so blind to the outside world that they cannot realize what treasures lie in their own tradition? Do they not realize that, religiously speaking, the Catholic tradition—for better and worse—is at the moment the only religious game in town? Is there a

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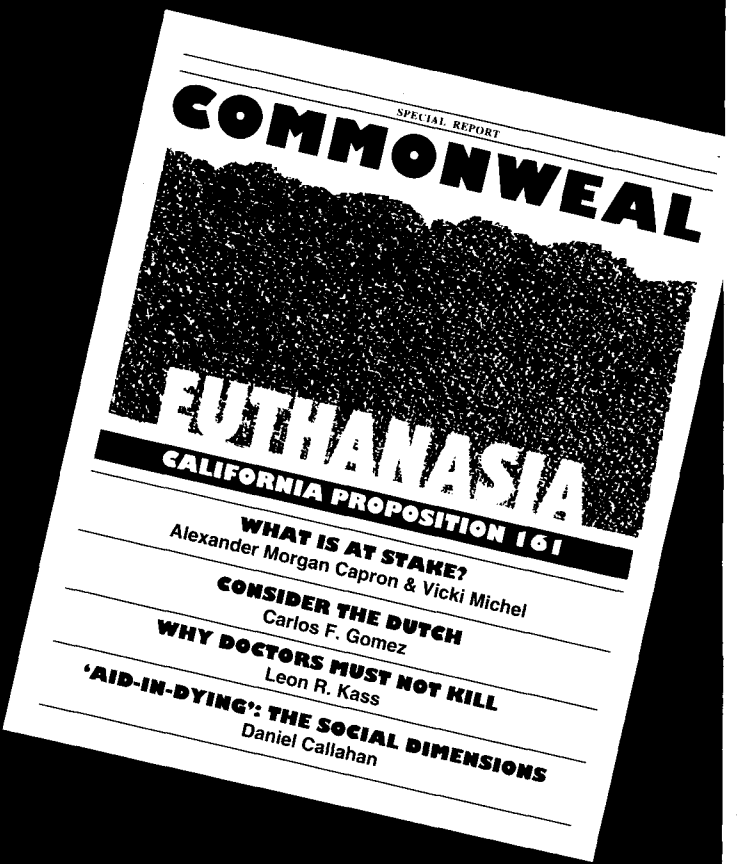

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Methodist tradition in the humanities? A Baptist? A Pentecostal? An evangelical? Indeed, is there a university or college left in those traditions which manifests a discernible intellectual pedigree?

Hear me when I say that in politics, in the arts, in the more comprehensive task of reimagining the social weal, there is no religious tradition that speaks more critically, more coherently, and, yes, more controversially to our sorely afflicted society than that tradition to which we are all the unworthy heirs. It is far from perfect and necessarily incomplete. But I ask: Must our Catholic college and university students be the last to notice that it exists? □

ALL IS NOT LOST

AN EARLY LOOK AT THE CLASS OF '96

MICHAEL J. HUNT

"The strongest signal yet of the passing of the decade of greed—and a hint that the '60s-style social activism is on the rise"; the *Boston Globe*'s education reporter, Anthony Flint, had been sifting through a statistical treasure house. It is the annual study of college freshmen that has been compiled for the last twenty-seven years by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles. This year's study of college freshmen provides us with a snapshot of attitudes, plans, backgrounds, and opinions based on a survey of 213,630 entering freshmen, statistically adjusted to represent the 1.7 million young people who entered college in the fall of 1992. Flint, along with other commentators, noted a growing social awareness among this year's freshmen. For example, when asked if they agree with the statement that "racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America," 85.1 percent disagree, up from 79.1 percent of last year's freshman class.

For those of us serving in the church's ministries to higher education, the UCLA study also suggests that we may have a much more receptive audience among college students than we have imagined.

A closer look at the study (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 13, 1993), yields some very interesting, if less publicized, insights into the religious identity and religious values of today's freshmen. When asked to name their *current religious preference* (italics mine), 30.5 percent identify themselves as Roman Catholic, indicating that Catholics, usually estimated at 22 per cent of the U.S. population, are over-represented. What makes that 30.5 percent noteworthy is that students themselves, and not their parents, were asked. In other words, they're self-identified Catholics. They also form the largest religious group among freshmen, followed by Baptists at 19.3 percent. "None" ranks third as a religious preference, with Methodists in fourth place (8.8 percent).

A major and frequently neglected religious demographic emerges in response to another question: "Are you a born-again Christian?" Almost a third, 31.7 percent, say they are. While little ambiguity was permitted by this question with its direct yes or no answer, the numbers suggest that the appeal of born-again Christianity cannot be treated as a transitory fad in American religious life.

That such a large number would claim affiliation with either Catholicism or born-again Christianity—the two most controversial and certainly the least politically correct religious groups in America today—constitutes a first point of reflection: Religious groups that offer a countercultural alternative to the dominant, highly secularized culture are exactly those religious options which attract the largest numbers and the greatest participation. The numbers in this study of college freshmen are yet another indication of the superficiality of secularist analysis that holds that the role of religion is in great decline and that the future belongs to those religious traditions that make the greatest accommodations to the prevailing culture.

Born-again Christianity and Catholicism arrive at their encounters with modernity from different histories and employ largely incompatible theological methods. Even so, both are at odds with some aspects of American society, propelling them into the center of several current controversies, some of them considered beyond the need of argument: complete personal privacy and freedom, the divorce of public law from the reach of traditional morality, tolerance of all manner of diversity (except that which questions the dominant culture), and the relegation of most individual or personal morality to a private, and irrelevant, sphere.

Abortion alone illustrates the substance and climate of current controversy. It would be both foolish and inaccurate to as-

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sume that every freshman who identifies as a born-again Christian or as a Catholic fully subscribes to that tradition's stance on abortion. Elsewhere in the study, 64.1 percent of all freshmen favor legal abortion. (The question as asked does not, as is often the case, make further inquiry into various levels of restriction on abortion as, for example, spousal notification, which will usually produce very different results.) But clearly any freshman admitted to college will at least know that these two religious traditions strongly oppose abortion. Nevertheless, approximately 60 percent of this year's freshmen are not thereby deterred from identifying themselves with one of the two traditions.

The UCLA-sponsored study also provides other interesting data. When asked about "objectives they considered essential or very important," 73 percent of the freshmen cite "being well-off financially." A close second is "raising a family" (70.6). The numerical closeness of these two objectives suggests that many who chose financial well-being as their objective joined it with their desire to provide well for their future families. This counters another stereotype of the young, that the selfish college grad wants to make money only for his or her own indulgence. As with the issue of religious identity, most observers of the college scene should find some cause here for surprise. Raising a family is simply not something you hear much about on campus or among the topics of hot seminars. When was the last time anyone saw a campus poster advertising a speaker or program on the topic of raising a family? Much more likely will be speakers and programs offering enlightenment about the oppressive nature of the family, or its obsolescence, or the need to cultivate alternatives to family life.

The high value given to raising a family might not surprise so much had we realized that, as the study also informs us, fully 70.9 percent of the 1992 freshmen have parents who live together, with 24.2 percent of their parents divorced or separated and an additional 4.9 with one or both parents deceased. Assumptions often made about the divorce rate being closer to 50 percent may have some statistical warrant but not apparently among the parents of college freshmen. Many college administrators and campus ministers (myself included) would have estimated the percentage of students with divorced parents at a much higher figure and, of course, that may well be the case at some schools and in certain parts of the country. Overall, however, the strong majority of freshmen nationwide will not have experienced the kind of family breakup on which many of their college courses will be focused and which is routinely depicted in the media as commonplace.

Another insight into the lives of these young people can be gleaned from a question that asked about their activities in the past year. The second highest score, 84 percent, was registered when they were asked if they had "attended a religious service" during the past year.

We do not know precisely what kind of services or how frequently the 84 percent attended religious services. Some no doubt attended weekly, perhaps at their parents' insistence, others may

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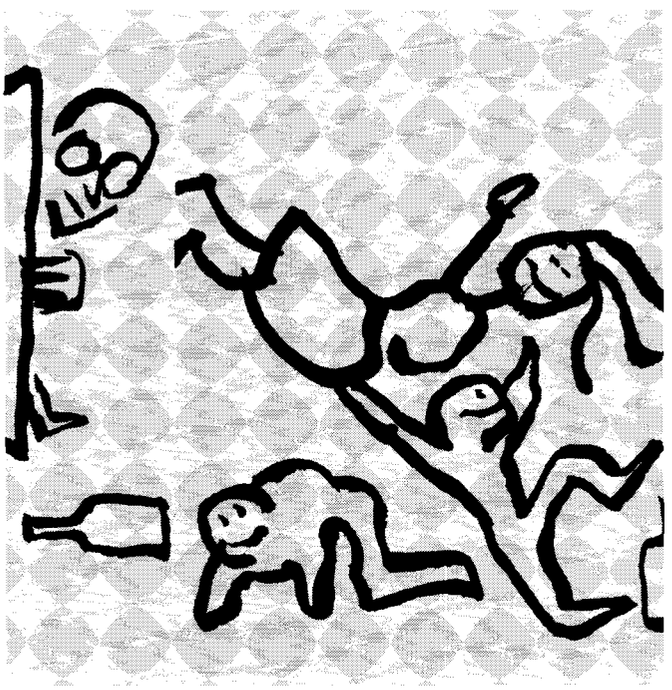
have qualified for a yes answer by their presence at a family funeral or wedding, while many will surely be somewhere in between. But even if we adopt the cynic's viewpoint and attribute the high response to a lot of one-time weddings and funerals, it is clear that over four out of five freshmen come from families that continue to celebrate these rites of passage in religious ceremonies. The great majority of freshmen are still connected, either personally or through their families, with communities of faith.

A freshman class in which, during the preceding year, only 9.1 percent say they regularly felt depressed, and only 24.6 say they regularly discussed politics, and only 22.4 percent regularly discussed safe sex, while 84 percent attended a religious service, raises doubts about the prospect of a strongly secularized and alienated future. Other views caught by the survey tend to reinforce skepticism of the usual stereotypes of young people. For example, 44.2 percent think its all right for two people who really like each other to have sex even when they have only known each other a short time. Most observers I know would have estimated that figure at about 90 percent. All would be surprised to see the dramatic gender gap in this response: 58.8 percent of the men thought such sex was fine but only 31.9 percent of the women agreed. If the patriarchal tradition which permitted men to think they had a sexual license denied to women has been overthrown by the sexual revolution, the class of 1992 offers meager evidence of such a turnaround in attitudes.

Far from fulfilling the image of an ever-increasing permissiveness with regard to behavior, freshmen think too much concern is shown in the courts for the rights of criminals, support the death penalty and the criminalization of marijuana, feel employers should be allowed to require mandatory drug tests from their employees, and are convinced that the best way to control AIDS is through widespread, mandatory testing. They do not think students from disadvantaged social backgrounds should be given preferential treatment in college admissions. Nor are they open to having the federal government raise taxes to reduce the deficit. On the other hand, they do think that there should be no laws prohibiting homosexual relationships, that national health care should be provided for all, that the government should do more to control handguns, and, as mentioned earlier, that abortion should remain legal.



The portrait of the freshman class that emerges from these numbers is one of independent-minded young people, unfettered by the party line of either the Right or the Left. Less than 2 percent expect to major in history and English, departments where the culture wars have been most in evidence. The fields of study to which more than 2 percent aspire are biology, accounting, business, management, education (elementary and secondary), engineering, premed, predental, preveterinary, communications, and law enforcement. The field of study, other than undecided, which draws the highest response, with 6.2 percent, is nursing. Even allowing for the predictable shifts in their career plans, it seems safe to say that most of the class of 1996 will move through their college years with only a peripheral awareness of the raging debates over political correctness, multiculturalism, race, class, and gender.

The church, like publishers and the mass media, is susceptible to theories that illustrate the alienation, secularization, and cultural radicalism of the young. Some in the church wring their hands over the inroads of evangelical and/or fundamentalist groups among young Catholics, others resign themselves to the perceived estrangement of the young from religious practice. There are vivid and numerous anecdotes of both phenomena. I think that both these readings are fundamentally inaccurate.

When our culture's contentious disparities jell around religious differences, secularism is often promoted as a form of peace-making. But now that strategy has itself become rigid and doctrinaire. The appeal of a secularist solution endured for years until many among the religiously committed came to understand that, far from being a *modus vivendi* among religious viewpoints, secularism had become the nemesis of religion. One approach, undertaken by some now declining mainline religious traditions, was to embrace secularity as a kind of neo-revelation and to make the appropriate moral and doctrinal adjustments to its requirements.

How the Catholic church calibrates its history-laden proclamation of the gospel to a dismantled American harmony poses one of the most interesting religious questions of our time. Whether this is the "Catholic Moment" or the "Moment of Catholic Irrelevance" is a quandary without apparent resolution. Some elements of that outcome are already contained in our reading of the "the signs of the times" as these are revealed in the lives and thoughts of young people.

The results of the UCLA study of freshman class of 1992—the assumed secularization of young people does not show up in its responses—should alert us to an error that may be embedded across the entire spectrum of our current readings of the "signs of the times." Young people are, in large numbers,

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rooted in religious tradition and, if their understanding and knowledge are deficient, they have nonetheless remained attached to the identity and values of their religious communities. To reach and serve them, we need to discard many of the commonly accepted filters we use to hear and to see them. We are not reaching out entirely to strangers and aliens but more likely to young people who have their own reasons to hear us out. Parents, campus ministers, and other committed adults are not whistling in the wind. We do have an audience, a young one, already sending out signals that it verges on being receptive. □

SCREEN

VIGILANTE CHIC

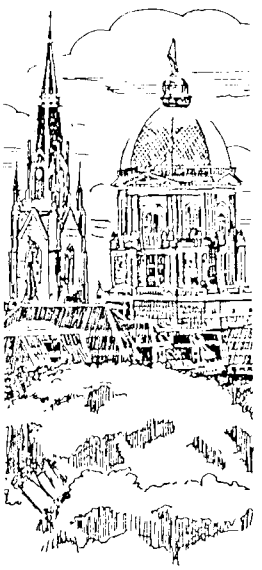
'FALLING DOWN'

Falling Down is a dishonest film but it's not hard to see how its very dishonestly has made it a hit. Written by Ebbe Roe Smith and directed by Joel Schumacher, this is a vigilante movie with a heart of (fool's) gold. The feeling of justified vengefulness it methodically arouses in the audience for most of its running time is punished only in the last few minutes. *Falling Down* has its poisonous cake and eats it, too.

The action unfolds in parallel lines. Michael Douglas, recently fired, divorced, and subject to dementia, abandons his car in an L.A. traffic jam and starts walking "home" to an ex-wife who fears him. A plainclothes cop (Robert Duvall), who has helped push Douglas's car out of the way, gradually comes to realize that the disgusted motorist and a certain madman terrorizing half the city's population are one and the same man. We are switched back and forth from Douglas's progressively more violent encounters to Duvall (who has his own domestic problems) trying to track down Douglas. We know the two are bound to meet at the climax of the story with fatal results for either or both.

It's an obvious set-up but a perfectly valid one for a melodrama or a satire or a serious study of urban anomie. Unfortunately, *Falling Down* just slaps all three genres together into one phony mess.

Douglas's role is that of a walking time bomb and we are meant to share the fear of his ex-wife (Barbara Hershey) that he will wreak destruction on her and her child. But the filmmakers don't want us to be completely distanced from him during his long trek home. So what is their solution? Do they take us so close to the character's thoughts and feelings that we empathize with and pity this man even as we cringe at his dangerousness? No. Taking the easy way out, Smith and Schumacher simply caricature everybody Douglas meets so that we cheer him on as he retaliates: an unrelievedly nasty Korean store owner; Latino punks played as the inhabitants



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BARBARA VAN NOORD

Between Seasons

I.
The moon hangs full in the sky
white and ripe as if to nod off
or fall, full of light.
In the garden at the time between seasons
only the moon fruits among silver stalks
that have wintered over.
In light, white enough to be snow
but no longer snow,
the conscience of the garden wakes.

II.
Lot's wife, nameless,
looking back as if the answer
lay behind her
or something of what is gone
could be retrieved,
became bitterness
in her own form,
the landscape pillared with her salt.
It is no light thing
to look back and harder still
to revise nothing, face the face
that stands, salted
with its private carelessness
call it by its accurate name.
If nomadic beasts lick Lot's wife
in passing, if the taste
has hardened there, the beasts,
still innocent, find
only thirst, and the taste
of regret on their tongues.

III.
In the night, bright moonlight
in the blocks of the window
reveals the garden and woods,
its creatures. A woman turns
in the white sheets,
cradling the saved seeds.
Her years, bright and dark
with trepidation, winter over,
as though truth could germinate
right there and uproot her.
This dangerous time between seasons
the moon hangs so full
it may fall and break,
pulling the glance backward
to see whether its pieces
have, perhaps, already shattered.
Memories teeter like glass
on the bright window ledge.
Frost heaves little fists
and heels of rock
up out of the sleeping garden.

IV.
The wait for daylight to come
and again produce the future
seems so long, the night so white,
the moonlight white enough
to be salt upon the ground.
The innocent animals thirst
among the stones—so many,
so white—already
accumulated in the garden.

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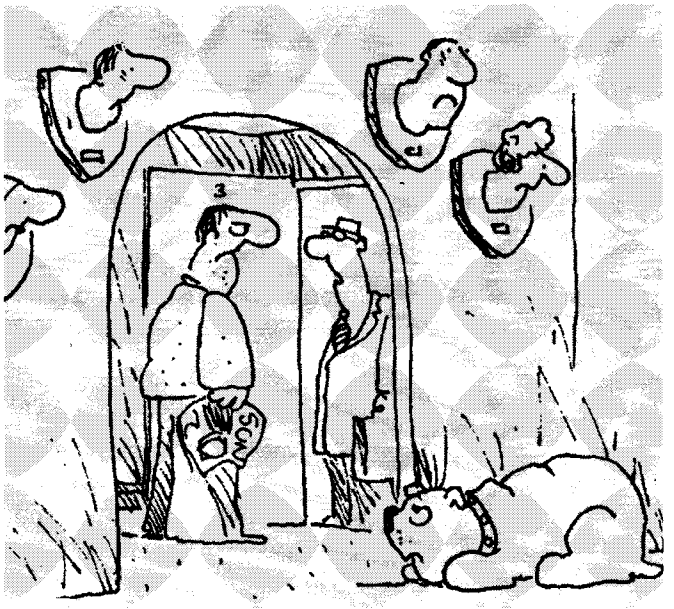
of a paranoid WASP's nightmare; fast-food employees so smarmy and rude that we long for Douglas to wipe the tight little smiles off their fresh-scrubbed faces; pompous country-club golfers who refuse to let Douglas quietly walk over their green; street repairmen who don't even wait for our pedestrian to speak before they start verbally abusing him; a skinhead fascist, who not only manhandles Douglas but even hints that he might sodomize him before our lovable psycho is forced to blow him away. These aggressors aren't even valid representatives of the irritating people we may encounter during our own daily routines. They are just maniacs who apparently jumped out of bed that morning hellbent on giving poor Mike Douglas a hard time.

Each encounter contains something nasty and/or ludicrous that is beside, or goes beyond, the point of each episode. But one sequence is both particularly ugly and quite revelatory of the filmmakers' odiousness. When our hero waves a rifle at the terrified crowd of fast-food patrons, the close-ups of each customer, food dropping from the mouths of some, are calculated to make us laugh at the victims. Now we all know about the 1991 massacre at a restaurant called Lubby's of about a score of people by a madman armed to the teeth as Douglas is. In fact, I'll wager that that tragedy was one of the inspirations for this movie. But consider this: that real-life madman wasn't provoked by insolent service. He just entered and started slaughtering. And, as if to prove that even the most crazed of persons can't be pigeonholed too easily, he deliberately spared certain people at random even as he killed others. But Douglas first lectures the counter people on the worthlessness of the food they're serving and then walks about trying to put the patrons at their ease even as he terrifies them with the weaponry he's toting. How disgusting to evoke such a piteous real-life catastrophe just to score cheap satirical points, to turn Michael Douglas into a sort of Ralph Nader with an automatic.

But that brings us to the question, isn't *Falling Down* a satire and aren't Douglas's victims caricatured simply because they are created, in the spirit of satire, to be targets of scorn?

I do grant that the script shows a certain bent for mischief in scenes such as the one in which a little black boy is able to teach Douglas how to use a bazooka by having seen the weapon used so much on TV. But if the Douglas sequences are intended as satire, how could they exist in the same movie with the obviously nonsatirical scenes of detective Duvall conducting his investigation? A satirical vision of life is not something you can conveniently bifurcate within one story. Imagine *Gulliver's Travels*'s satirical-fantasy episodes shuffled in with straightforward maritime adventures, or *Animal Farm* interrupted by a naturalist's descriptions of barnyard life. *Dr. Strangelove* was legitimately peopled by monsters because Stanley Kubrick had created a monstrous, perfectly stylized world for these grotesques to inhabit. Schumacher and Smith lack the talent or perhaps even the desire for such artistic unity.

Having exhilarated their audience with Douglas's vendetta against fools and knaves, the filmmakers then punish their protagonist for his violence. In the final encounter, Duvall so convinces Douglas that he's been a "bad guy" that the vigilante is



"Mr. Garner, I've come regarding some disturbing reports about your dog."

willing to give up his life in expiation and despair. Thus, *Falling Down*, a rabble-rouser for ninety minutes, affirms its liberal-humanist credentials in the final reel. That may satisfy some viewers but I'll take an honestly Fascistic movie like *Dirty Harry* any day instead of this pseudoliberal hogwash.

The only redeeming features of this movie are the two lead performances and one supporting job. Duvall can't seem to make a wrong move. Like Henry Fonda and Peter Finch at their best, he achieves an art that conceals art. But he's not only natural, he's compelling. That he's magnetic when playing obsessives in *Apocalypse Now* or *The Great Santini* is fitting but not surprising. But that he can be *amiably* magnetic in *Tender Mercies*, *The Seven Percent Solution*, and this movie, is wonderful. Michael Douglas lacks Duvall's residual power. He must really work to deliver, but here he does deliver. This characterization is more admirably seen and felt by the actor than by the writer. Seeming stockier than usual in a white dress shirt, squinting behind nerdy glasses, holding his body upright with offended reasonableness, Douglas marches his character to his doom. In the one-scene role of the skinhead, Frederic Forrest gets under the viewer's skin by employing nails-against-the-blackboard mannerisms just far enough and not an inch further.

Oddly enough, in the supporting cast, all the important female players perform well below their usual level. As Duvall's shrewish spouse, Tuesday Weld, sadly encased in fat and screeching monotonously, repels. The usually vivid Barbara Hershey is dim as Douglas's ex. As a policewoman, Rachel Ticotin walks through her role as if she had been auditioning for her new TV series, "Crime and Punishment" (in which, by the way, she is very good).

So there you have it. Another "hot" American movie that is cleaning up at the box office because it tries to be all things to all people and, alas, succeeds. RICHARD ALLEVA

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STROKES OF GENIUS

'WINGS' & 'FOOL MOON'

I went to *Wings* at the Joseph Papp Public Theater with more curiosity than anticipation. It had been enthusiastically received at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and it carried its reputation with it to New York. Still, I am suspicious of musical adaptations of straight plays, particularly of plays that I admire as much as I do Arthur Kopit's original *Wings*. It is difficult to realize that it has been almost fifteen years since *Wings* first played in New York because the play and Constance Cummings's luminous performance as Emily Stilson are still vivid in my mind. (I hate critics who describe performances as luminous, but Cummings's really was.) I did not want music to soften or sentimentalize Kopit's tight, clean, lyrical account of Emily's stroke, her struggle to reassemble the verbal fragments in her mind, and the strangely exhilarating final vision that was her death. I might as well have left my misgivings at home, for the new musical has much of the power of the original.

Kopit, who has turned his hand to musicals on occasion (*Nine* and the non-Webberian *Phantom*), seems to have done nothing with this adaptation except provide the source. That is a major contribution since Arthur Perlman, who wrote the book and lyrics, sticks close to the structure, the intention, and often the words of the play. Perlman and Jeffrey Lunden, who did the music, have worked together for years, but there is nothing in their credits to prepare one for the quality of *Wings*. The music and the sound design by Richard Woodbury provide the disorientation that signals the stroke and then the transitions in and out of intelligibility for Emily. In this, they are working rather as music (Herb Pilhofer) and sound (Tom Voegeli) did in the original Yale Repertory production of *Wings* which, like the Goodman musical, found its way to the Public.

This *Wings,* true to its genre, has songs, set musical numbers. For the most part, they serve both the play and the musical. Working from a brief exchange in the original play, Lunden and Perlman have written a yum-yum-yummy song for the nurse, who, like too many nurses, treats her patient as a child, trying to coax her to eat while the inarticulate Emily is not yet able to shout her horror. It is a comic scene, but as Ora Jones plays it, descending on Emily like a benign harpy, the song is as frightening as it is funny. In another song built on a scene from the original, Billy (Ross Lehman), one of the therapy group, sings a repeated verse about his cheesecake recipe, each time ending with a mispronunciation until he finally succeeds in correctly saying/singing "cheap." If he seems a bit too articulate in the verse itself, we can accept it by remembering how another Billy (in the opera *Billy Budd*) could musically transcend his stammer. Besides, Billy's triumph is shared by the group, and it is a comic variation on the excitement Emily feels when she gets a word right—as in the charming duet with Amy, her therapist, in which she remembers the name for *snow*.

The most interesting change that the musical works on the play comes at the beginning when Emily suffers her stroke. In the play, she is sitting reading, and it is the variation in the ticking of the clock that provides the sound indication (there is a light and shadow signal too) that something is happening in her mind. Here she puts an old record on the wind-up victrola, a song that was used to introduce her and her family when they were barnstormers, bringing their aviation act to fairs, and she was a wing-walker (in the musical, as in the play, wing-walking provides the metaphor for what she is undergoing). The cheerful, tinny song is doctored into incomprehensibility as the stroke attacks her, and it recurs in various forms and to good effect all through the musical.

Although the secondary characters in *Wings* are important to the texture of the piece, the role of Emily is the heart of the musical as it was of the play. Perhaps because the role is so demanding, two performers share the part. I saw the piece at a matinee, which is when Rita Gardner plays Emily, and a very impressive Emily she is. Take out your original cast recording of *The Fantasticks* (doesn't everyone have a copy?) and listen again to the very young Rita Gardner, insouciant as The Girl in the first act, petulant in the second. The charm of that Gardner is in evidence in some of the scenes in *Wings*, tougher now and not for a moment winsome, but time and experience and a strong part give Gardner the force and intensity that Emily needs. If the final scene does not work as well for me as it did in the play, it is not Gardner's fault. Oddly, the music undercuts the beauty of Emily's last long speech, insisting that this is the big aria, where Kopit's spoken words—in Constance Cummings's mouth—simply engulfed the listener. If you share my memory of the original *Wings*, there is still time to test it at the Public; if you do not, there is still time to win your own *Wings*.

Fool Moon (at the Richard Rodgers) is theatrical entertainment of a very different kind, but it is a triumph in its own right. A clown show starring Bill Irwin and David Shiner with the strong support of The Red Clay Ramblers, it is a delight that needs few words from me as the two performers need no words at all. Irwin has taken to words recently, as in his fascinating performance in Joseph Chaikin's production of Samuel Beckett's *Texts for Nothing* at the Public last fall, but here he shares silence with Shiner, whom I had not seen in his earlier appearances with the Cirque de Soleil. Considering that both men seem to be able to make anything of their bodies, they are contrasting physical types, and they play contrasting clown types as well—the amiable Irwin, the ferocious Shiner. Each does his own routines, often with the help of willing audience participants, and they join forces frequently, even at one point borrowing one another's trademark disaster exit. I saw the production with a friend who muttered as the lights went up, "I could watch them all night." I probably couldn't, but his was certainly a legitimate response.

GERALD WEALES

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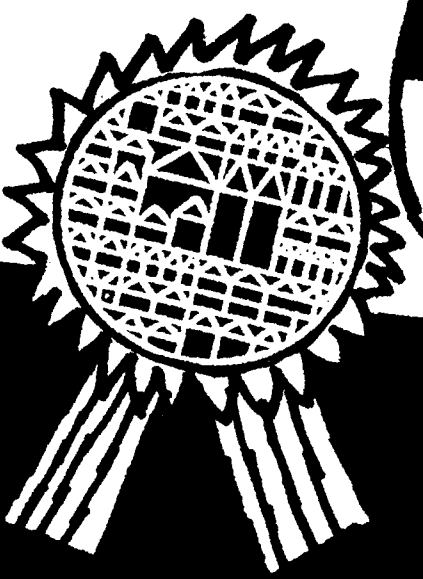

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A professor's progress

EXILES FROM EDEN
Religion and the Academic Vocation in America
Mark R. Schwehn
Oxford University Press, $19.95, 141 pp.

Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr.

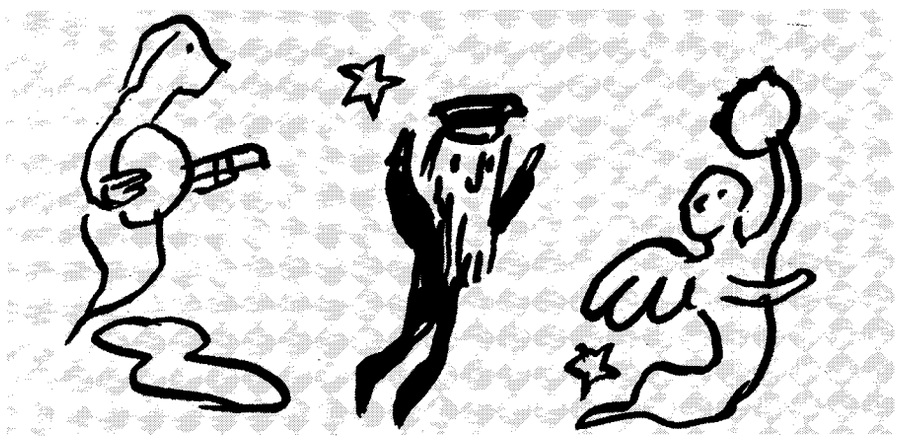
The central metaphor of this volume on the connection between religion and the academic vocation is drawn from anthropologist Clifford Geertz's suggestion that most academics start their careers "at the center of things" and then find employment by "moving toward the edges...lower down or further out." Geertz calls this phenomenon the "exile from Eden syndrome."

But what would one make of a scholar who intentionally left a tenured position at a prestigious secular university (Chicago) in order to take up teaching at a much smaller, religiously committed university (Valparaiso), as the author of this book did? Schwehn notes the irony that nothing in his reading of Genesis 1-3 had led him to consider edenic the University of Chicago, at best a paradise lost. But why Valparaiso? Surely not because the university's name, "vale of paradise," adequately encompasses its reality. Surely not because it has the financial resources of its more prestigious neighbor to the north. The principal reason for his move from Chicago to Valparaiso, says Schwehn, was that he "found [he] could pursue [his] own sense of the academic vocation more fully and responsibly at Valparaiso than at Chicago."

Schwehn's powerful essay on the academic vocation explains not simply why this voluntary exile was appropriate for him, but also why it is essential to reconnect religion and higher education in America. The central burden of his argument is "not to explain, much less to justify" this connection, but "to account for how we could ever have lost sight of it." Among the chief culprits are the European philosophers of "enlightened" secular rationalism such as David Hume, who remained blind to the relationship between spirituality and learning. Or the German sociologist, Max Weber, whose programmatic 1918 essay, "*Wissenschaft als Beruf*," Schwehn explores at length and in subtle depth as a radical transmutation of the religious vocabulary of the Reformation. Or even former Harvard President Derek Bok, whose ruminations in 1986 to the Board of Overseers of his university falsely contrasted the duty of scholars to make and transmit knowledge with the inability of Harvard's faculty to help students learn how to "become more mature, morally perceptive human beings" and thus lead "ethical, fulfilling lives." Or Allan Bloom's book a year later, *The Closing of the American Mind*, with its trenchant criticism of the drift and rootlessness in much of modern American higher education, but without anything like the subtlety of understanding of the connection between vision and virtue that Schwehn persuasively argues can be found in religious community.

Schwehn deftly analyzes what these disparate sources of our current malaise in higher education have in common: a rejection of the connection that higher learning must have with religion in order to flourish. Put more positively, he reappropriates the language of the spiritual virtues to develop a compelling alternative account of the academic calling. Among these virtues are humility, faith, self-denial, charity, friendship, and justice. Aware that many might wonder what these virtues have to do with academics they have known or with faculty meetings they recently attended, I simply urge these skeptics to read Schwehn's perceptive commentary on the link between these virtues and the academic life well lived.

Schwehn mentions several times the golden rule of hermeneutics proposed by literary critic Wayne Booth ("Read as you would have others read you; listen as you would have others listen to you"). More to the point, he exemplifies this rule by offering a charitable reading of those he subjects to the rigors of his criticism, including Hume, Weber, Bok, and Bloom. He esteems each of his opponents—or better, his partners in dialogue—and he appreciates their contributions in the very act of dissecting the flaws of their claims. Thus



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the virtues of the Enlightenment are not overlooked, but its vices are identified as the defects of its virtues. He takes seriously the claim of the Enlightenment to find a better path to truth in reason than in religion, acknowledging that passionate religious commitments have led to destructive tribalism and violence. But he notes with equal force the evil of secular totalitarian regimes of the Left and the Right that have left behind human carnage by the millions in our own century.

By avoiding a tendentious selectivity of historical data, Schwehn reaches conclusions that are compelling precisely because they do not exceed the warrant of the evidence he adduces. So when he announces his own leap of faith, it seems quite reasonable by comparison to the secularist dogma that the risks of reviving religious conflict are too great. "Remove the notion that theism should seek to achieve consensus about the good, and the specter about reviving religious conflict largely disappears....Suppose...that theism has been and will continue to be responsible for cultivating and sustaining the very virtues *that make productive study of and conversation among rival conceptions of the good possible*. To the extent that this is true, the risks of weakening the great religious traditions are too great."

Exiles from Eden is not a vindication of the value of church-related colleges at the expense of secular colleges and universities, but a volume that university administrators in both religious and secular settings could usefully give their faculty colleagues to help restore a better sense of the purpose of their academic vocation. Schwehn's broad conception of the role of teaching in the academic vocation is masterly, enabling scholars to overcome their commonly felt alienation from contact with real students as a distraction at best from their "real work" of research and publication.

This point could have been strengthened by widening the scope of inquiry to include at least a passing reference to the fact that the overwhelming majority of teachers in America are not employed in colleges at all, let alone in prestigious research universities that operate on a mechanical approach to the "publish or perish" rule, with all the dangers of excessive specialization, intellectualization, and disenchantment. They teach children and teen-agers in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. By all reports, many—some say most—of these teachers do an inadequate job. Schwehn's understanding of teaching as a true calling or vocation has profound implications for one of the most troubling social policies in America today, the lamentable state of the education of our youth. If it strains credulity to think of the University of Chicago as edenic, it is all the more fanciful to imagine that teachers' colleges are paradisiacal. But Schwehn passes over in silence the even more massive "exile from Eden" of hundreds of thousands of elementary and secondary teachers who are anything but delighted to be in their classrooms. We are left with only the vaguest hint of a connection between his understanding of the vocation of teaching and the larger problem of effective teaching in our society. When Schwehn writes that "All academics are

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exiles from Eden," he really means all college profs, even though he acknowledges the problem of the formation and deformation of most eighteen-year-olds before they get to college as a "most troubling" question. Schwehn appears innocent of one of John Silber's rare funny comments, that "we had to invent the term 'postsecondary' because we no longer had an adequate answer to the question, higher than what?" Focused exclusively on postsecondary education, this volume does not directly address the "rising tide of mediocrity" in American education that was decried bootlessly in the early years of the Reagan era, that remained unchanged by the "Education President," George Bush, and that does not even now seem urgent to the reinvestment strategies of the new president.

Exiles from Eden is a compelling argument both for the restoration of religion in the understanding and practice of the academic vocation in general and for the more particular efforts of religious communities to transmit their convictions in the setting of modern higher education. It is especially urgent at a time when several institutions of higher learning—including several Catholic colleges and universities—have experienced a failure of nerve or a loss of rootedness in their religious traditions, and therefore an adequate reason for their continued existence. □

RATTLING GIBBON'S CAGE

POWER AND PERSUASION IN LATE ANTIQUITY
Towards a Christian Empire
Peter Brown
University of Wisconsin Press, $12.95, 182 pp.

Carl L. Bankston III

"If the decline of the Roman Empire was hastened by the conversion of Constantine," remarked Edward Gibbon, "his victorious religion broke the violence of the fall, and mollified the ferocious temper of the conquerors." In this once influential view, both the advantages and disadvantages of Christianity for Roman political society stem from the faith's softening of moral character. Although this "softening" did help to lessen the savagery of the barbarians from the north, within the civic structure of the empire the effects of the religion were almost entirely negative. While the bishops "inculcated the duty of passive obedience" and discouraged the "active virtues of society," the monks engaged in lives of "sacred indolence," or so Gibbon famously maintained.

When Peter Brown taught at Berkeley, he taped a photograph of a cage in a zoo on his office door. Attached to the cage's bars was a large sign that read, "Do Not Approach the Gibbon: It Bites." The ability to provide fresh approaches to issues that date back to Gibbon's mordant phrases is surely one of the qualities that has made Peter Brown, now at Princeton, the preeminent contemporary historian of late antiquity. In *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity*, he reopens the question of how the empire's transformation from paganism to Christianity affected its civic culture.

Brown describes this volume as a "synthesis" of themes found in a large body of modern scholarship. An old view of late Roman government, expressed by J.B. Bury in 1910, held that the empire of the fourth and fifth centuries was an "absolute monarchy," with all power vested in the emperor, and that its political constitution was a relatively simple matter of centralized personal authority and popular obedience. Given this division of the Mediterranean world into ruler and ruled, Gibbon's argument that Christianity's sole contribution to Roman political life was an attitude of compliant otherworldliness seems plausible.

Recent students of the period, however, tend to emphasize that the late empire remained a system of laws, and that the Hellenistic tradition of the philosopher-king restricted the emperor's freedom of action. To these normative limitations on autocracy, Brown adds the limitation of distance. The empire was a big place. Communication, always slow and troublesome in antiquity, became even more difficult as the northern barbarians blocked overland routes through Western Europe and the Balkans.

Imperial government, in this pretelegraphic era, depended on the cooperation of local elites with the emperor and his representatives. *Power and Persuasion*, therefore, treats how the *devotio*, or "loyal support," of local notables toward the central government was maintained by the upper-class culture shared by the indigenous provincial notables and officials of the imperial administration. In the matter of taxation, in particular, the empire remained a "commonwealth of cities." The cities held the responsibility of extorting taxes from the peasants of the surrounding countrysides. While the peasants could be coerced into obedience, this coercion depended on an elaborate system of courtesy to ensure the collaboration of provincial aristocracies.

The upper-class culture that united the rulers of the Roman world was inculcated by the system of education known by the Greek term *paideia*. *Paideia* bound the ruling classes in codes of courtesy and assigned a special role, that of persuaders and admonishers of the powerful, to philosophers. A long and intellectually demanding training in Greek literature and rhetoric provided social distance from the lower classes, an ethic of friendship that created widespread networks of contacts, and ideals of deportment that helped limit violence by prizing self-restraint.

Since the emperor himself was expected to stand at the apex of this pyramid of cultivated social values, even the monarch's behavior was bounded by educated opinion. When educated opinion proved insufficient against the power of the emperor, however, tradition assigned

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to the philosopher the duty and right of *parrhesia*, or "freedom of speech," to act as privileged moral adviser to the court. In this way, the elites, in their own eyes, were connected to the ultimate source of political power and were convinced that they could exercise persuasive control over it.

During the last decades of the fourth century, Christian monks and bishops began to replace philosophers as the moral bridges between the rulers and the ruled. These Christian notables usually emerged from the old upper classes and shared many of the ideals of *paideia*. However, instead of basing their claims to eminence strictly on membership in a cultivated social group, the Christian leaders presented themselves as "lovers of the poor." A worsening economic situation and an apparently rising population throughout the Eastern Empire made the poor, those without a defined place in society, an increasingly visible and political presence. Overflowing the countryside and crowding into the cities, the poor were readily mobilized and integrated into the retinues of the bishops.

In the Christian literature of the fifth century, the juxtaposition of autocratic secular authority and the mass of impoverished humanity provided "a new language of power." *Power and Persuasion* describes how power was recast in a Christian image. Appeals to the emperor moved away from references to the shared classical culture of an elite minority and began to emphasize that, just as God had condescended to become man through Christ, so the ruler should condescend to recognize his common humanity with the broad masses of the ruled.

Brown's attention to the role of culture in maintaining such tenuous social systems as the late Roman Empire offers a useful corrective to the tendency of many contemporary social scientists to deal exclusively with formal structures and material resources. His reading of primary sources, such as the works and letters of Libanius of Antioch and newly discovered letters and sermons of Saint Augustine, is at once sympathetic and objective, offering both a sense of the writers' experience of their world and a modern interpretation of that experience.

The description of the impoverishment of the empire's population during the fourth century may be a bit misleading. This impoverishment does not appear to have been the result of a sudden crisis, as Brown leads the reader to believe. It was the product of a gradual, long-term trend created by the steady growth of commercial farming rather than subsistence farming, the drying up of slave labor as the empire reached its territorial limits, and the continuing increase in absentee ownership of agricultural land that concentrated wealth in urban areas. Seen in this context, the image of society presented by the Christianity of the bishops was a long overdue response to a world that had changed drastically since the empire's creation.

While there may be some debate about the socioeconomic roots of this transformation in civic culture, professional historians and general readers alike will find Brown's book an erudite and convincing portrayal of the emergence of Christendom from the remains of the classical state. □

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OFF WITH THEIR (TALKING) HEADS

DOUBLE AGENT
The Critic and Society
Morris Dickstein
Oxford University Press, $23, 220 pp.

POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS
Higher Education and Group Thinking
David Bromwich
Yale University Press, $30, 257 pp.

Lee Siegel

Morris Dickstein's new book goes straight to the issue of "whether a meaningful criticism is still possible, or whether the professionalization of criticism has turned it simply into an academic 'field' where the criticism of criticism now has its own comfortable niche." By "meaningful criticism," Dickstein means just that distillation of society's mute commotion into thoughts and phrases that make intelligent conversation possible.

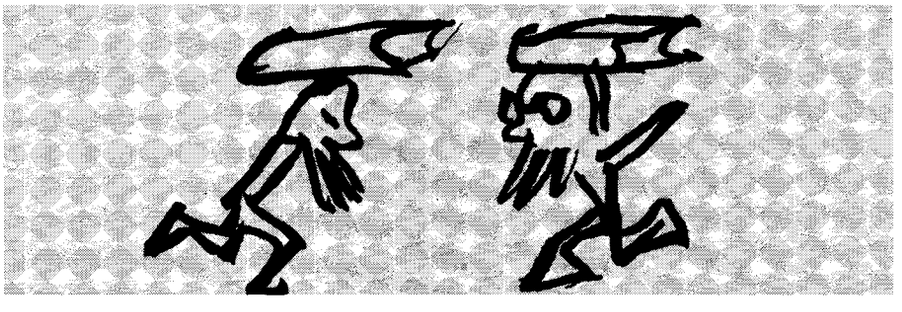
Dickstein's "double agent"—the title is from a book of the same name by R.P. Blackmur—operates in the "the dark and bloody crossroads where literature and politics meet," in Lionel Trilling's phrase. Dickstein has assembled brief, thoughtful portraits of critics who worked in both realms and wrote prose whose public clarity was a strategy of political and literary engagement. A sensitive, learned, and accomplished critic himself, Dickstein is a first-class guide to the history of public criticism in this century, from Matthew Arnold up through Van Wyck Brooks and Mencken, Edmund Wilson and Malcolm Cowley, Orwell, Trilling and, finally, the *Partisan Review* crowd. The book's finest section is an imaginary dialogue at the end, in which a poststructuralist theorist locks horns with a more traditional belles-lettrist. If it had been more carefully composed, this sophisticated survey might have led the way to a general intensification of pleasurable thinking and writing. Dickstein might have been the Erasmus of a renaissance in literary journalism.

Refreshingly, Dickstein doesn't take sides; maddeningly, however, he doesn't seem to have a point of view. He defends the poststructuralists' preoccupation with social and political issues by showing how the greatest criticism has always mixed literature with society and politics, and then he criticizes them for writing in a jargonized, inaccessible language that earlier critics would have found futile and self-defeating. That is balanced and cool-headed, but what Dickstein doesn't grapple with is how the poststructuralists' language follows from their reductionist intellectual premises. There is a difference between R.P. Blackmur writing that poetry "adds to the available stock of reality" and the poststructuralist critic Edward Said praising William Butler Yeats for giving "us a major international achievement in cultural decolonization." Whether it is a difference in literary receptiveness, methodology, or IQ, Dickstein should, for the sake of a "meaningful criticism," have made some attempt at discrimination.

Unfortunately, Dickstein tends to qualify a point until it is rarefied beyond comprehension. "Even in its most reasoned recoil from politics," he writes in a typical sentence, "*The Liberal Imagination* was Trilling's most political book." The mind begins to glaze over at being told that Philip Rahv's style was "ponderous but adroit." There are no real contradictions here, of course, but there is nothing being said either. It is rational skepticism as a reflex not a sensibility, a skepticism that is at once precious and baroque. I share Dickstein's admiration for Lionel Trilling, still a sort of lighthouse in the modern conceptual gloom, but Trilling had a tendency to present his ideas with a ginger solemnity as if they had come over on the *Mayflower*. I wonder what even he would have made of Dickstein's super-civility in remarking that Trilling's own "gift for inclusive and suggestive formulations... anticipates the skepticism of the deconstructionists." Such delicate sidestepping always ends in a faux-pas.

Double Agent is finally almost as much a symptom of the scarcity of a public criticism as a comment on it. Haphazardly thrown together, marred by repetitions and disconnections, it seems, for all its bright *aperçus*, an easy two cents hastily tossed into the final round of the cultural fray. Once we impart terms and definitions to things that used to enrich us because they were natural and unformulated we inter them in stone. A public call for a public criticism, replete with examples of the way it used to be done, is as good as a death knell for public criticism. What Dickstein really wants to see is more intelligence and imagination. He should exercise his own instead of cautiously whispering "more intelligence! more imagination!"

If David Bromwich's new book had appeared sooner, Dickstein might not have had to go searching for sustenance. Brilliant and deeply felt, *Politics by Other Means* should not only be the last word in the debate over higher education, but a classic work on a timebound controversy, a kind of "Reflections on the Multicultural Revolution." You would have to call Bromwich a Burkean socialist, a one-man coalition of Left-liberal political and conservative cultural views. Exasperated with both the neoconservative and the aca-



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demic-Left vision of culture, he occupies a beleaguered and hard-won third way rather than Dickstein's hyper-decorous Olympian middle-air.

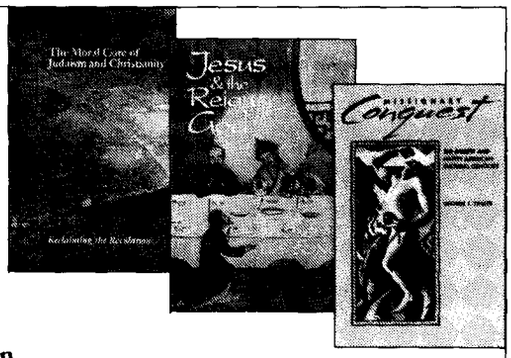
Bromwich places the multicultural issue in the big picture of American politics and culture. He sees the cosmopolitan solidarity of the old Left travestied by the academic Left's "group narcissism," its creation of artificial communities based more on professional self-regard and private self-estrangement than on shared sentiments. He is keen to the complicity of Right and Left in each other's excesses, to the fact that as the savage capitalism of the Reagan years grew more heartless, the urge to prove one's virtue became more aggressive and amoral. For just as Reagan dazed the American people into thinking they could get everything for nothing, "institutional radicals" thought they could reform society by merely readjusting the curriculum.

Some academics believed that the university itself as an institution could effect changes conceived of in the sixties as anti-institutional. At the same time, Reagan apparatchiks like George Will and William Bennett—Bromwich's two main villains on the Right—tried to define culture with a regal eighties' complacency as an institutional safeguard against the barbarians at the gate. Both sides, argues Bromwich, enthroned authority over tradition, preferring official visions to an organic fluidity of perspectives.

For Bromwich the casualty in this conflict is the individual, for whose preservation Mill created the widest political berth and Burke the most generous sense of historical time. These two figures, and especially Burke, are the book's presiding spiritual presences. Yet I find them of limited application to American culture, which has always rambunctiously teetered between the Puritans' hunger for divine authority on the one hand and a transcendental individualism on the other. It might have been possible to examine the permutations of the English political tradition in American history by themselves. Instead, Bromwich hankers after a resurgence of ideas that only existed here as refractions through American politics and society. There is a touch of Anglophilia that makes Bromwich's quintessentially American jeremiad pristine and even misdirected at times. Bromwich quotes Michael Oakeshott's lovely remark that education is "a predicament not a journey." But in America our predicaments, like those of Huck Finn, or Clyde Griffiths, or Jay Gatsby are our journeys too. Lacking British boundaries, Americans have the same nose for teleological movement that the British have for class.

Critics concerned with the literature of imperialism like to think they are exposing the skull of power behind the flesh of art in older literary works, busying themselves with asking questions like: Who was paying for Mansfield Park? Bromwich has done for our own time what these critics often so anachronistically and absurdly try to do for the past. He places their intellectual agendas in relation to their own interests. They are, he says, creating a caste of authoritarian administrators in the name of a self-serving professionalism. In their yoking together of art and ethnic identity, Bromwich sees a "principled bigotry" at work. In

The Politics of God



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the spectacle of professors raised in privileged affluence teaching minority students from impoverished, crime-ridden neighborhoods that "you are where you come from," I see the most insecure sort of snobbery. These radical elitists have even expropriated the word "privileged." The Marx who might be able to analyze how this farce is fast becoming a tragedy is Groucho, not Karl.

Teaching literature is not about the imposition of authority because literature is not about universals, whether universal truth or universal oppression. Art is a particularity without end. Empathy rises on a flood of complexity not a stack of imperatives. Against multicultural calls for the enforcement of respect—not just tolerance—for other lifestyles, Bromwich makes his own plea for negative capability, for critical irony, pluralistic ambiguities, and paradox. *Politics by Other Means* is for the happy few—though not so happy if Bromwich's pained gravity is any indication—who have strong convictions but no fixed ideology. It is written in the tradition of the great public critics Dickstein wistfully invoked. If Bromwich continues in this vein, and acquires a bit more of a capacity for amusement and humor, he might help break up the frozen sea inside the culture. □

ONE OF THE WORLD'S BETTER SOCIETIES

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AMERICAN
Michael Walzer
Marsilio, $18, 124 pp.

R. Bruce Douglass

Is cultural homogeneity something democrats should be concerned about? Is it important to the health and well-being of democratic states that their citizens speak the same language, read the same literature, celebrate the same holidays, pray to the same gods? To hear some people talk, this is the last thing any *real* democrat would be concerned about. Living as we are in a time when the democratic cause is being closely linked with the cultivation of "difference," it is easy to get the idea there is something inherently antidemocratic about any sort of concern with cultural sameness. But in reality the matter is, of course, not so simple. For cultural cohesion is something every functioning society needs, and democracies are no exception. In fact, it is arguable that they *in particular* need it. Anyone who thinks otherwise needs to be reminded of what is happening these days to the new democratic regimes of Eastern and Central Europe.

The problem, however, is that once this is recognized, it is not at all easy to know what to do about it. For there is a sense in which the imposition of any sort of alien cultural identity on people against their will violates the spirit, at least, of what democracy is supposed to be about. And it is easy to imagine all sorts of oppressive things being done to cultural minorities in the name of one or another kind of democratic nativism. But at the same time, if nothing were to be done to bring about their acculturation, one can just easily imagine respect for diversity turning into a recipe for cultural (and political) fragmentation.

Fortunately, however, these are not our only options. At least that is what Michael Walzer thinks. And in this new book, which is devoted to analyzing the American experience, he seeks to show why. For this country, as a nation made up of immigrants drawn from a wide variety of different races and cultures, has enjoyed considerable success, he believes, in dealing with the challenge posed by cultural pluralism. It has had its share of racism and xenophobia, to be sure. But over the years the people of this country have worked through the inclinations they have had in that direction to create what he says now deserves to be thought of as "one of the world's better societies."

The secret of this success, however, is more complex than it first appears. For it is not just a matter of keeping citizenship as distinct as possible from the rest of people's identity—or, of keeping the state culturally "neutral," as liberals would have us believe. That is part of the story Walzer has to tell, and there is no mistaking the importance he attaches to it. It *does* matter, he says, that immigrants have not had to abandon altogether their cultural heritage to become citizens. But he is a shrewd enough observer to see that that is not the whole story. For in a sense, of course, those who have come to these shores *have* had to change their identity. A "Polish-American" is not the same thing, after all, as a Pole. We do have a culture of our own in this country (to put it mildly), and acculturation is something that does occur. But it is a culture of a distinctive sort, says Walzer, and for that reason the acculturation that has gone on here has taken place in a distinctive manner. Because the culture has been as open and pluralistic as it is, acculturation has been a two-way street. So the character of what

"Then we're agreed, gentlemen. We're not only proud of our record, *we're proud of* ourselves."

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we share in common as Americans has itself been informed by the traditions immigrants have brought with them even as they themselves have had to undergo "Americanization."

It is not just, moreover, that cultural minorities have been encouraged to believe that they have a contribution to make to the culture of this country drawn from their own heritage. What has made an even greater difference, says Walzer, is that—up to a point—they have been encouraged to *cultivate* that heritage as well. So over the years American society has become a rich mix of different subcultures, each of which has been able to pursue its own distinctive version of the American ideal in its own way. And as this has happened, the peoples involved have gone about creating the extraordinary array of voluntary organizations that has given this nation such a strong and vibrant civil society.

What it has *not* done, however, is produce a very active form of citizenship. We Americans may be prepared to pay our taxes and defend the nation in wartime. But over the years it has not been our practice, says Walzer, to involve ourselves very actively in public affairs. Not on an ongoing basis, at least. Occupied as we have been with the business of other "lesser" societies, we have been inclined to leave the disposition of public issues to the few who chose to take an interest in them. Nor have we had all that strong a sense of solidarity with one another as citizens. The social bonds that have mattered to the people of this country have had much more to do with the subcultures of which they have been a part than with the nation as a whole.

This indifference to public affairs is not something that Walzer, as the strong democrat and socialist he is, finds appealing. Nor is he insensitive to the problems it poses for democratic practice. There are passages in the book when he speaks eloquently of the dangers that are posed by the appeal in this country today of an "antipolitics of privatization"—dangers he readily admits are growing all the time now that the attachment Americans have had to their ethnic roots is fading. But when it comes to showing how those dangers might be met, all that he is prepared to do is repeat, once again, the familiar homily about the need to create a new, more participatory politics. In addition, of course, he urges that public policy be made in such a way as to counteract the atomistic tendencies that are being bred by the preoccupation that the courts now have with individual rights.

The problem, however, is that in the absence of a change in the character of American culture, it is hard to see how any of this stands much chance of happening. The logic of what he has to say seems to be that if only, somehow, we could restructure our political and economic life on terms that were more conducive to an engaged citizenry, the "culture of privacy" that now prevails would just wither away. But surely that is overly simple. People who are as apolitical as Americans now tend to be are not going to be changed in that regard just by restructuring things. As his own analysis suggests, it's something deeper than just a lack of opportunities for participation that prevents the American people from investing much of themselves in *res publica*. It is a whole way of life—one that reflects a particular view of how life is meant to be lived. And unless *that* were to change, it is unlikely much else will change.

But to acknowledge that would be to face up to the need to take responsibility more directly for the character of the culture. It would be to recognize that something more may be demanded of us these days than just accepting whatever happens to come from the free play of spontaneous forces—something Walzer is wary of doing. In fact, he warns against any overt effort to "shape citizens in a common mold," saying that it's illiberal and therefore inappropriate in a society of the sort the United States now is. But if that is accepted as the last word, the problem he poses is almost certainly insoluble. And that is why I come away from what he has written with a sense that the success the United States has had in dealing with cultural pluralism is a lot more ambiguous than the *tone*, at least, of his analysis would suggest. I can't help but think, too, that the only way we are going to be able to make any real headway in solving the problem Walzer poses is by having more of a willingness than he has to call into question the prevailing liberal orthodoxy. □

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WANTED FOR TRANSPLANT: AN ONTOLOGY

IF I WERE A RICH MAN COULD I BUY A PANCREAS?
Arthur L. Caplan
Indiana University Press, $29.95, 348 pp.

Christopher F. Koller

Newborn intensive care units struggle to keep premature, drug-ravaged babies alive while healthy fetuses are being aborted down the hall. Doctors and nurses labor to honor a dying man's request to keep him alive by all possible means at the same time as 15 percent of the U.S. population lacks any form of health insurance.

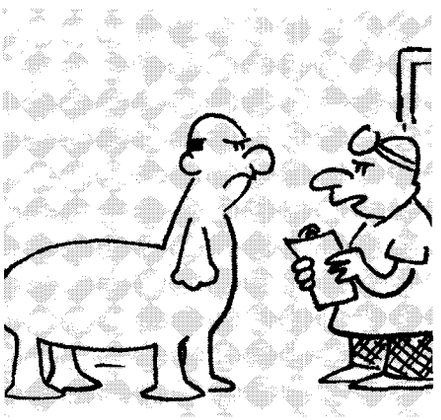
Morality—normative codes of moral behavior—is of little use in these circumstances; the Ten Commandments and the magisterium are mum about who should receive a bone marrow transplant. In this situation, caregivers turn to applied ethics in order to analyze which principles are at stake and which should govern the outcome.

But basic principles must be agreed upon if they are to be applied. In our culture, religious pluralism, Enlightenment values, and an anti-authoritarian ethos have enshrined reason and individual autonomy. Each person is free to choose for him or herself among an array of possible goods, and reason is the primary tool in evaluating those goods. Given the ultimately subjective nature of this view, the ethics industry spends a lot of time trying to construct an elaborate groundwork that will logically prove the superiority of one principle over another. This is thin gruel for those who have to control the ethical fires that rage in a health-care system fueled by a consumer-oriented, individualistic, technologically driven culture.

Given this scenario, can ethics really help people make tough decisions? Arthur Caplan says yes.

Caplan, a philosopher and director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Minnesota, writes from the perspective of the health-care practitioner for whom moral conflicts are too pressing to wait upon elegant ethical arguments. And in this collection of nineteen essays he takes up a variety of moral conflicts—from human and animal experimentation, reproduction and genetics, transplants and rehabilitation, to money and medicine—trying to justify the usefulness of applied bioethics against critics who argue that without a foundational theory, applied ethics is all leaves and no roots.

Mundane decisions are the stuff of patient care and they can have a central ethical importance. An astute and relentless observer of the quotidian in health care, Caplan rightly asserts that here ethics can be of real value. But in spite of lucid and accessible writing and some provocative thinking, the book is something less than the sum of its parts.



"Oh, stop griping—we were lucky to find any donor at all!"

Through all of the essays, Caplan tries to negotiate among the shoals of "engineering ethics" (in which moral plumbers apply their analytical tools to the problem at hand); of foundationalism (the search for unifying ethical theories); and of teleological ethics (which holds that there are intrinsic goods and evils that can be located along a range of better and worse choices). But navigating among them, Caplan risks missing the port altogether, for nothing he writes about leaves the reader any better equipped to address ethical conflicts.

As I suggested at the beginning, Caplan is not alone in this problem. Absent an articulated and ordered set of principles, ethicists doing applied work are much like the teen-age mechanic who is considerably more proficient in taking things apart than putting them back together. The dilemma they face—along with all medical decision makers—is all too real: How can ethics be made accessible and applicable in a culture where we cannot assume a common understanding of a moral order and where reason-based ethical theory falls apart once it leaves the classroom? Moral theologians and other teleological ethicists face the same problem: reasoning based on the *Imago Dei* and Christ's redemptive suffering hold little sway in a tertiary medical-care center.

Caplan's frustration with foundationalism and engineering ethics is shared by many health-care practitioners, but he offers nothing in their stead. Neither these paradigms nor Caplan's own effort truly recognize the relational and fragmentary nature of applied ethics, especially in a medical-care setting. There ethics involves groups of people trying to discover the right thing to do. Ethicists participate in this process with a collection of resources. As a physician carefully works with patients to allow them to choose their care, so must an ethicist step gingerly with patients. With experience and reflection, tradition and reason, a sense of the good can emerge from these discussions and relations. At the collective level that dialog is called politics and policy making.

Caplan inches toward this notion of relationality when he tries to set a value on wisdom—the collected, reflective experience of the older person—in ethical decision making. But his "just do it" methodology leads him to adopt and then discard such values in an ad hoc manner: autonomy here, wisdom there, and a preference in the extreme for the quotidian.

Enshrining reason and autonomy results in making comprehensiveness and consistency the evaluative criteria in eth-

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ical decision making. Caplan implicitly forsakes these criteria when he forsakes foundationalism. But there has to be a middle ground between his "just do it" spirit and more philosophically systematic approaches. No doubt, he has a limited bag of principles that describe most human conditions and values. When these conflict he has a reasonable suspicion about which to honor. It is the reader's loss that he cannot present them even in a fragmentary fashion, because at least part of what informs ethics is what individuals value—what Caplan values—and those beliefs encompass much more than reason. □

AT PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES

DEMOCRACY
The Unfinished Journey: 508 B.C. to A.D. 1993
Edited by John Dunn
Oxford University Press, $25, 290 pp.

Patrick J. Deneen

Liberal democracy has won the cold war, and John Dunn and his colleagues have taken the occasion to write a collection of essays accounting for democracy's unlikely yet undeniable success. Unarguably a timely work, *Democracy* benefits from the advantage of being a collaborative volume in which each author brings an impressive expertise to his or her historical purview.

For well-conceived panoramics there is Charles S. Maier's essay on democracy since the French Revolution and Neil Harding's trenchant indictment of Marxist-Leninism; in Biancamaria Fontana's treatment of the French Revolution we may have among the first fair and balanced accounts of that ambiguous and disputed event; while shorter versions of earlier and monumental books by Quentin Skinner and Gordon S. Wood appear on the Italian city republics and the American Revolution respectively. *Democracy* will serve admirably as a departure for anyone wishing to learn more of these eruptions of popular rule throughout history.

Yet, the collection also suffers from that usual disadvantage of multiple authorship: because each essayist is immersed in his or her topic, the book lacks an overall focus. Notably absent is any sustained attempt to define those essential aspects of democracy outside the particular historical moments that each chapter undertakes, to measure temporal vagaries against a higher standard, even to assume a critical stance on democracy itself. While the neglect of democratic theory is not surprising, its source is less the varying political viewpoints of the authors—although certainly contributory—than the underlying assumptions of their common vocation as historians. Among adherents of this school there is an admitted reluctance to draw any broader lessons from historical knowledge, and this is tantamount to an admission that historical contingencies, not human nature, are largely responsible for political outcomes.

The only overt, if apologetic, engagement of the fundamental excellences and inadequacies of democracy occurs in Susan Mendus's chapter on feminism. The reigning question for Mendus is, what is it about democracy that precludes female participation? Is it simply that democracy has had its prejudices too, and can be fixed with relative ease by adding women (or blacks or the poor) to the mixture? Or are there fundamental flaws in the very concept of modern equality? Does modern democracy assume a corporeal equality that cannot exist? Paradoxically, a wholly procedural equality that neglects natural inequalities—such as our "equal" right to family leave that almost invariably disrupts only women's career paths—may result in an exacerbation of those existing in-

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equalities. One recalls Anatole France's quip that in Paris all are equally forbidden to sleep under bridges, although this seems somehow to apply disproportionately to those without roofs.

Mendus's recapitulation of feminist theory's difficulties with liberal democracy is adequate, at times subtle, but like many feminists Mendus is ultimately too narrowly concerned with the postmodern paradoxes of equality to concern herself explicitly with justice. Yet justice may demand that we measure human shortfalls occurring from accidents of fortune and nurture against an older standard of civic and even natural equality, one that goes beyond purely procedural means.

Mendus looks in this direction by proposing that "difference" be added to our current understanding of equality, suggesting a scenario in which natural (as in gender and race) and cultural distinctions would be received within the polity. Yet Mendus, like many "multiculturalists," too easily embraces any difference regardless of its possible antagonism to democracy itself. Her solution to procedural equality remains, at base, procedural: rather than assuming abstract equal rights at birth, she would substitute an equality of differences. But democracy cannot afford to be indiscriminate about its tolerance of difference. As we are now witnessing throughout the world, many groups base their "identity" in direct antagonism to democratic ideals of speech and persuasion, instead opting for the bullhorn and the gun. Justice demands that we be attentive to the contents of those claims for equality, and not merely respect any claim in itself.

Mendus's inattention to principles of justice underlying democracy is not unexpected given the inaugural treatment of these themes in Cynthia Farrar's essay on Greek democracy. In an original, engaging, but misleading analysis of ancient thought, one replete with modern liberal assumptions, what most disturbs Farrar is the uncomfortable blending of the public and private in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. In short, they demand too much unity between the individual and the polity, integrating excellent democratic practice with private virtue. To be preferred are the Sophists, who in Protagoras's phrase consider "man the measure of all things," thereby according all citizens a theoretically equal capacity of participation in the political order, regardless of whether virtue or viciousness constitutes that measure.

Plato and Aristotle, alternatively, make the divine the measure of all things, thus setting a standard to which all people, despite varying and sometimes radically limited opportunities, are nevertheless held to equal account. The political sphere points beyond itself, at its best enabling citizens to approximate those perfect standards even as it inevitably falls short. Neglecting, even repudiating such standards, all that remain are secular measures.

Indeed, Quentin Skinner in his essay embraces Machiavelli's call, contra ancient and Christian philosophy, that the objects of democratic republics be civic glory and liberty. Yet Machiavelli is ultimately not as sanguine about the mutual coexistence of these goals as Skinner would have us believe. Always with Machiavelli one must consider means and ends, and he is quite revealing in this instance. "It is easy," he writes in the *Discourses*, "to understand how an affection for living a free way of life springs up in peoples; for one sees by experience that cities have never increased either in power or in wealth unless they have been established in liberty." Skinner cites this passage as though the goals are entirely compatible, yet Machiavelli explicitly makes liberty a means to achieving power and wealth, not an end in itself. As modern regimes demonstrate at every turn, wealth eventually challenges a citizenry's most evident form of freedom, shared speech and action in political life. If we forgo participation in communities in favor of exercising our liberty to pursue wealth and power, will our freedoms last? This logic ultimately condemns democracy to ruin: without the constant interplay of citizens in public spaces that maintains the uneasy coexistence of liberty and equality, we lose the element that makes democracy more than a name or a system. In neglecting to consider this self-corrosive aspect of modern democracy, *Democracy* does not fully succeed in living up to its name. □

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FABRICATING THE REQUIRED CHARM

CRY ME A RIVER
T.R. Pearson
Henry Holt, $22, 258 pp.

Bethe Dufresne

Coming as I do from a family whose branches stretch from the Carolinas to Mississippi, I have long been well-acquainted with the charms of Southern storytellers. But it took T.R. Pearson's *Cry Me a River* to illuminate the most distinguishing characteristic of such yarn-spinners. Southern storytellers are masters of digression. And to keep their listeners riveted, they must make both the myriad side-trips interesting and see to it that all roads ultimately lead back to the main event. *Cry Me a River* is a brilliant illustration of this intricate craft. It is a detective novel whose revelations never add up to absolute certainty or a courtroom conviction, but to something much rarer—justice.

Never mind that only the narrator and the reader understand justice has been done. We come to feel, with the narrator, that justice is almost too ambiguous a concept to speak about.

Set in a small Virginia town and narrated by a cop, the novel has a timeless quality that makes the narrator's oblique references to recent movies and familiarity with videocassette tapes jarring. Pearson's outrageously courtly humor makes palatable, even delicious, the otherwise grotesque picture of a dermatologist called in to assist a dismembered truck driver or that of a woman who has filleted her philandering husband like a trout.

Pearson, best known for *A Short History of a Small Place*, is the author of five previous novels. He has been compared to the far gentler Garrison Keillor, or even to William Faulkner, with whom he shares a penchant for long, complicated sentences. But at times his humor is so baldly bizarre that I was reminded of the newspaper humorist Dave ("I'm not making this up") Barry.

Cry Me a River's story begins with the image of a woman, a woman who "hadn't been born into loveliness though plainly she'd compensated, could manufacture well enough what she needed of seduction, fabricate what she required of charm. She didn't have much call to be beautiful too. That would have drained the sport from it." From here the narrator digresses, or so it might seem, into savagely funny tales of murderous rage, bloody wrecks, domestic spats, and remorseless cops. Yet when the woman's image reappears as a cropped and creased Polaroid in the secret compartment of the wallet of a dead man, we realize that we, too, have secretly been carrying it around with us.

This novel is a wholly unconventional tale of crime and punishment, the kind of story that could never be resolved in a courtroom because certain crimes of the heart can't be written into law. The carnage that sets it all in motion is stumbled upon late one lazy night off a country road, where the narrator, accompanied by his drunken sidekick, Ellis, has spied the abandoned vehicle of Wendle, a fellow cop. Down the hill in the brush, a pulpy mass snagged on a thorn bush strikes the excitable Ellis as a living, biting menace, but turns out to be a chunk of Wendle's skull. The occasion prompts the narrator, who wasn't all that fond of Wendle, to reminisce about the many facets of carnage and terror, this being one particular facet he hasn't seen a lot of before.

"I'd seen the burned ones, seared and scorched and suffocated, and seen of course the forlorn ones too, the hanged ones, the poisoned ones, the gassed ones, the ones afflicted with misery enough to make of their shotguns and make of their revolvers unerring authentic narcotics.

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"I'd not, however, had much call to see too many murdered ones since locally we weren't given ourselves to that variety of mayhem."

Mayhem of a different variety, however, is never in short supply. It is a Southern tradition that if ever the true story isn't good enough, you make one up. And so we have Mrs. Heflin, who "could concoct from a murky shadow and a couple of leafy limbs a most devious manner of ne'er-do-well afflicted evermore with a spectacular array of unsavory intentions," and Ellis with his fantastic tales of seducing fancy ladies, Ellis who liked to be of service to the police force and did in fact once apprehend a fleeing suspect by vomiting all over him.

Only the narrator, in that wonderful way that Southern storytellers have of establishing intimacy, seems to be disinclined to stretch a point, though why would he need to in the company of cops like Dewey, who "was by disposition a hoodlum dangler," which is to say he used to enjoy suspending suspects by their ankles over a considerable height.

Plenty of novels have been written to explore the psyche of the policeman, whose willingness to place him or herself in the face of death is of unending interest to the rest of us. It is one of this novel's many strengths that it doesn't appear to have been written for that purpose at all. The narrator gives us the only clue he has quite incidentally. But he doesn't pretend even to himself that it approaches an explanation.

The clue has to do with his stepfather, Wade, who wasn't a policeman, but once was deputized and subsequently ended up deciding, without really planning to, whether someone would live or die. *Cry Me a River* subtly but unforgettably reveals how making a decision like that changes anyone who's of a mind to think about such things, and not just the sporting type, like Dewey.

Or like her. □

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THE POPE WHO COULD

THE FINAL REVOLUTION
George Weigel
Oxford University Press, $25, 255 pp.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE COLD WAR
Owen Chadwick
Allen Lane The Penguin Press, $25, 230 pp.

Michael Lavelle

How does the church in Eastern Europe react to fervent new nationalisms, to those who collaborated with the once-hated Communist regimes? How did the church perform in the political tragedy that stole fruitful lives from so many people during the cold-war years? What role did the church play in the 1988-89 revolutions?

For the answers, one must look to the past forty years of oppression and pain. George Weigel's *The Final Revolution*, and Owen Chadwick's *The Christian Church in the Cold War*, try to do this.

Weigel's book, well-written and well-argued, presents an accurate and moving picture of the church behind the Iron Curtain from 1948-89. He has entered into the pain and staying power of the people and their churches. His thesis is persuasive and cogent: "It is impossible to understand both the *why* of the revolution...and its *how*...without taking considerable account of the Catholic church and preeminently of its supreme pastor... John Paul II."

Weigel evaluates and rejects four alternative theories for the fall of the Communist regimes: Mikhail Gorbachev's liberalization of the Soviet Union; Ronald Reagan's hardline policies; the Helsinki Act; the weight of economic and historical pressures. To make his case, Weigel describes a watershed event in Poland: Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski's nine-year novena of religious instruction for the Polish people. Ending in 1966, the millennium of Polish Christianity, it was a success, and enabled Poles to overcome their fear of the regime. As pope, John Paul II carried on the traditions of Wyszynski.

Heroically, Pope John Paul II called the church, particularly in Poland, not to have fear. He was the first pope not to take the Yalta Agreements as a given. A Slav, he entered the Polish political scene as no Italian pope could have. Using his astute political sense, he set the stage for the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland, and encouraged church activism. His courageous 1979 pilgrimage to Poland allowed all of Eastern Europe to realize that something different from communism was possible. His continued support of Solidarity and the church in their resistance gave courage to everyone.

Weigel suggests that the pope's actions created a domino effect moving through the rest of Eastern Europe, ending with the complete collapse of the Communist regimes. He has made me a believer in the strength of Pope John Paul in changing the history of the twentieth century. However, my experiences in Czechoslovakia, over twenty-eight years, lead me to conclude that the impact of the pope in the rest of the Iron Curtain countries, while important, was not as significant as it was in Poland.

Poland was unique because of its century-long history of political dissent. This was not true in East Germany, nor was it true in Czechoslovakia, especially the Czech Republic, which lived in an uneasy truce with the Hapsburgs until 1918. Moreover, neither East Germany, Czechoslovakia, nor Hungary (in spite of Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty's long stay in the American embassy in Budapest) had a cardinal of the stature of Wyszynski, who, backed by popular support, consistently stood up against the Communist regime.

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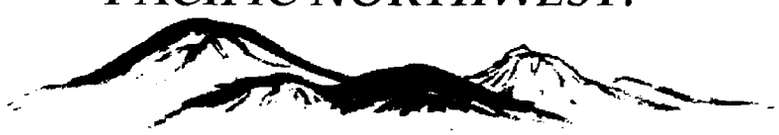

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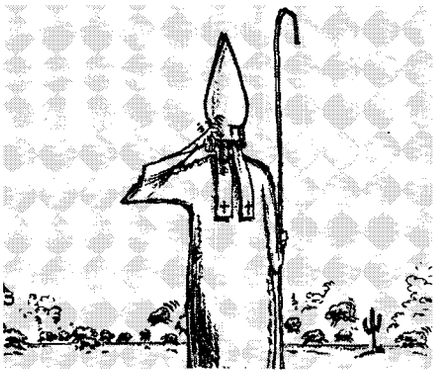
It is true that Czechs and Slovaks gained courage after seeing fellow Slavs in Poland take on the system. However, without Mikhail Gorbachev's actions in liberalizing the Soviet Union the Polish revolution itself would not have taken place. Perhaps Gorbachev was forced to acquiesce in Poland because of disastrous economic and political problems at home (what Weigel calls the economic and Reagan theses). But in East Germany, we must remember, the revolution followed Gorbachev's indication that an overthrow of Erich Honecker would not result in a Soviet invasion. Whatever one's assessment of Gorbachev's motives, these events seemed to have occurred independent of any action by John Paul II.

True, there was a strange confluence of events that followed Karol Wojtyla's being made pope. His election and subsequent activities, together with Gorbachev's being at the helm of the Soviet government in the mid-1980s, were both major catalysts for change in the East. Weigel captures the spirit of the society in which the churches lived, the cynicism of the regimes,



and the despair of the people. He shows the bankruptcy of the system against which Pope John Paul II pitted his considerable political and spiritual strength. The official deceit and meanness of the regimes were systematic, and Weigel, in a feat I would never have imagined possible for someone who had not actually lived it, effectively depicts a corrupt Eastern European society.

The dilemma of complicity is also examined. How, as a new society evolves, do we measure degrees of guilt in complicity and compliance with the old regime? How much cooperation and collaboration was too much? Almost no one was totally clean. The answers are not easy.

Weigel is also keen to discuss the bankruptcy of the Western Left in its understanding and criticism of the Communist system. The Left, Weigel argues, would not let itself believe in the human horror of the system behind the Iron Curtain. It did not believe that Marxism, as practiced in Eastern Europe, was as vicious as any rightist totalitarian system. Intellectuals in the East saw this inconsistency among Western liberals and scorned them for it; one reason, perhaps, why Catholics I knew in Czechoslovakia seemed much more at peace with the American political Right than Left.

To highlight this point, Weigel quotes a letter from Father Vaclav Maly to the theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, asking him how he could participate in a Prague colloquium on human rights while so many of his own coreligionists, including Maly himself, were deprived of their rights to worship and enter society as full citizens. Independently, the then Jesuit provincial in Prague asked me how the Society of Jesus could allow Father Daniel Berrigan to come to a "freedom" conference in Prague when over a hundred of his Jesuit brothers were unable to function legally in the country in which he was speaking.

The Final Revolution bears reading. It presents hope that one man's courage, Pope John Paul II's, can change a system that seemed embedded for eternity.

Owen Chadwick's, *The Christian Church in the Cold War*, is not in the same ball park with Weigel's. He describes the persecution of the Christian churches in Eastern Europe. He then turns to the church in Western Europe, focusing more on religious changes that have taken place since World War II. The book is not focused, and no specific theme emerges. In many places the book reads a bit breathlessly as if the professor were trying to give an hour's lecture in forty-five minutes.

The churches in East and Central Europe now face the same difficulties that loom in the future for all civil societies. Our knowledge of their past is useful if we are to aid the development of these churches in the future. □

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WHERE'S WALDO? & WHERE'S STAN?

AGAINST THE NATIONS
War and Survival in a Liberal Society
Stanley Hauerwas
University of Notre Dame Press, paperback
$12.95, 216 pp.

Michael O. Garvey

Objectivity isn't all that it's cracked up to be, but subjectivity isn't much better, so a confession is in order at the outset. Longer ago than I care to admit (and, no doubt, much longer ago than he'd care to admit), I took a couple of undergraduate theology courses taught by Stanley Hauerwas, who was then on the theology tenure track at Notre Dame (he now teaches in Duke University's divinity school), and he quickly became one of my favorite teachers. A congenial but intimidatingly erudite Methodist preacher whose accent betrayed origins far south of the Mason-Dixon line and far west of the Mississippi, he was fairly conspicuous on a northern Catholic campus. I imagine he stood out in the theology department, too, because at exactly the same time most of his colleagues were determined to show us how much Christianity was like other beliefs and movements and revolutions, he was inviting us to regard it as unique, utterly strange, dangerous and...that odd word...true.

I can't help but wonder what they make of him at Duke.

Catholic thinkers who address contemporary political issues—J. Bryan Hehir, Richard McBrien, Richard McCormick, Michael Novak (and, for that matter, the editor of *Commonweal*)—are usually uninteresting precisely because their arguments lack such a distinctively Christian voice. When the panel discussion on the "MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour" or "Nightline" or "Donahue" turns to whether of not to castrate rapists, snuff grandma, buy smart bombs, or distribute condoms to gay seminarians, finding the Christian ethicist can be like playing "Where's Waldo?" Nine times out of ten he or she will be advancing arguments and raising questions which presuppose that here we do indeed have an abiding city.

What distinguishes Hauerwas from such theologians is not only pacifism and a Texas accent, but also his contention that "theological convictions have lost their intelligibility. They have lost their power to train us in skills of truthfulness, partly because accounts of the Christian moral life have too long been accommodated to the needs of the nation-state, and, in particular, to the nation-state we call the United States of America. As a result, the ever-present power of God's kingdom to form our imagination has been subordinated to the interest of furthering liberal ideals through the mechanism of the state."

This is the sort of prophetic cussedness which leads many critics to dismiss his work as "sectarian," a sobriquet which could hardly be expected to scare off a Texan, but which Hauerwas vigorously denies in any case. Introducing these essays, originally published more or less contemporaneously with the writing and publication of the all-but-forgotten bishops' letter on war and peace, he insists that his theological project is "aggressively world-affirming. Indeed, I find it odd that those who are so committed to the liberal values of the Enlightenment characterize a pacifist position as sectarian since they are usually the ones who develop justifications for Christians in one country killing Christians in another country on grounds of some value entailed by national loyalties. Surely if any position deserves the name of 'sectarian' it is this, since it qualifies the unity of the church in the name of a loyalty other than to the kingdom of God."

Although he cheerfully assails the efforts of such sectarian secularists, Hauerwas agrees with them that the church must occasionally address the world on issues of public policy. Nevertheless, the church must meet the world on the church's terms. "We must attend to the distinctiveness of our language," he writes, "and to the corresponding distinctiveness of the community formed by that language, because it is true." The bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace would have been a much different document had its authors been so attentive.

To follow Hauerwas's recommendations about language may well be to despair of lunch meetings with Henry Kissinger, appearances before Senate subcommittees, and the respectful attention of the movers and shakers, but it is not an invitation to withdraw from the world. It is an insistence that Christians engage the world first and foremost as citizens of God's alien kingdom. "I would say the same thing I am saying now even if I did

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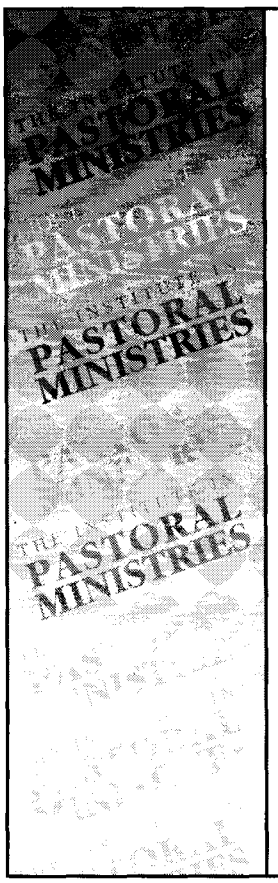
not believe that such an emphasis more likely will help us meet 'the needs of the future,'" Hauerwas admits. "Yet I think such is the case, because I believe that what Christians believe about what God has done for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the truth and thus cannot but help us meet the future with hope and enthusiasm." The world view Hauerwas espouses seems identical to that described by the writer of the ancient letter to Diognetus, who observed that Christians "reside in their respective countries, but only as pilgrims....They are unknown, yet are condemned; they are put to death, but it is life they receive." You just can't get much less utopian than that.

These essays—on matters as diverse as theological method, nuclear disarmament, pacifism, the Holocaust, and the Jonestown suicides—are united by a gracious alienation which enables their author to flush out and rough up many of the dogmas of sectarian secularism. In writing about Jonestown, for example, he argues that to dismiss the suicides of Jones's followers as pathological mass hysteria is a "dangerous trivialization" which emerges from the assumption that "being modern involves at least agreement that no one ought to take religion too seriously, especially if it is going to ask any real sacrifices from us." Arguing that the dead of Jonestown died bravely, but as martyrs to a false god, Hauerwas adds that they were failed by the contemporary American society in which Jim Jones was allowed to assemble his People's Temple. Since that society no longer believes that "issues of truth and falsity pertain in matters religious," it is a society which is incapable of recognizing the demonic and thus helpless against such powers as those which reigned in Jonestown.

The one quibble I have with this writing (and I insist upon at least one quibble...God knows Hauerwas chewed up the stuff I wrote when he was trying to teach me) is its occasional absence of detail. About an appropriate posture toward nuclear armament, for instance, he says that "Christians, exactly because their hope is grounded in God, must learn to wait patiently by refusing to let the danger of nuclear weapons tempt us to buy security through apocalyptic threats. Such a waiting does not mean we withdraw from the struggle by wallowing in self-indulgent despair. Rather our waiting must be a time of activity that seeks to present to the world the excitement of God's peace." I can't help but wonder what such activity would look like, and Hauerwas doesn't say much more about it. I suspect that he would be recommending such activity regardless of the clock-reading on the cover of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. I'll bet such activity would look a lot like what once were called the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, acts too often dismissed as the products of a complacent, even decadent piety. (Just read *Nation* columnist Christopher Hitchens on Mother Teresa some time.) If anyone could give a compelling account of the "excitement of God's peace" inherent in such activity, Hauerwas could. □



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(Continued from page 2)

name is Roy Cohn and J. Edgar Hoover) homosexuals of history. In my heart of hearts I do not relish the prospect of seeing my charism "routinized," regarded as lightly as left-handedness or double-jointedness. Still, I realize that this is my snobbism talking, my wish to be numbered among the "elect," the chosen few. My conscience tells me otherwise: that we should not be discriminated against with respect to employment or housing or spousal rights, that we should be allowed to adopt children if we prove to be caring and loving parents (and thanked for not exercising the "right" to breed in this increasingly overpopulated world). And of course we should be admitted into the military if that's our heart's desire.

My advice to all those who would oppose so-called gay lifestyles would be to admit homosexuals *quam primum* into their churches and clubs, armies, navies, and labor unions. It is the one surefire way to make us like everybody else. Nevertheless, I can't help thinking what a poorer world it will be. FRANK OVEIS

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How the bishops stood

Denver, Colo.

To the Editors: George Anderson's excellent report on the rise of gay-bashing ["People Are Getting Hurt," February 26] is partially in error in its assertion that "the Catholic bishops of Oregon and Colorado opposed the antigay referenda voted on last November." It's true that the Oregon bishops strongly opposed the referendum in their state. In contrast, the three Colorado bishops, acting through the Colorado Catholic Conference, early took a "neutral" stance toward Amendment 2, which forbids any legislation specifically protecting the human or civil rights of homosexuals.

The bishops did not disclose their individual stands, but sources in the three dioceses and in the media confirmed to me that Bishop Richard Hanifen of Colorado Springs personally opposed the amendment, Bishop Arthur Tafoya of Pueblo was neutral, and Archbishop J. Francis Stafford of Denver favored its passage. Archbishop Stafford two years ago was the only church leader in Denver who opposed passage of a local law banning antigay discrimination. He is one of the two U.S. bishops on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which last July issued the statement referred to by George Anderson entitled "Some Considerations Concerning the Catholic Response to Legislative Proposals on the Non-Discrimination of Homosexual Persons."

The amendment, of course, passed, and has sparked punitive anti-Colorado boycotts across the country. Every leader of mainline Protestant traditions in the state vigorously opposed the amendment. The winning margin was definite but not overwhelming. There was no leadership in the Catholic community on the issue; many believe that if there had been such leadership, the amendment never would have won.

JIM SUNDERLAND, S.J.

A waste of words on war

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: Because my head tends to shut down whenever I read arguments involving the intricacies of the just-war theory, I leave it to cleverer minds to counter Stephen Pope's critique [February 12] of *La Civiltà Cattolica's* editorial on "Modern War and Christian Conscience."

Instead, in my efforts to educate myself, I seek refuge in the inspiration that shines through the 1983 bishops' peace pastoral, whose stated purpose was "to help Catholics form their consciences and to contribute to the public policy debate about war." There I am reminded that "it is necessary that human beings, in the intimacy of their conscience, should so live and act in their temporal lives as to create a synthesis between scientific, technical, and professional elements on the one hand, and spiritual values on the other" (*Pacem in terris*); that "at the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person," for "God is the Lord of life and so each human life is sacred." And, from the pages of *Commonweal*, I cling to Patrick Jordan's insight: "...[O]urs is not a religion of abstractions, even if it finds Aristotelian, Augustinian, or Thomistic distinctions useful....It is incarnational, a faith grounded in person-

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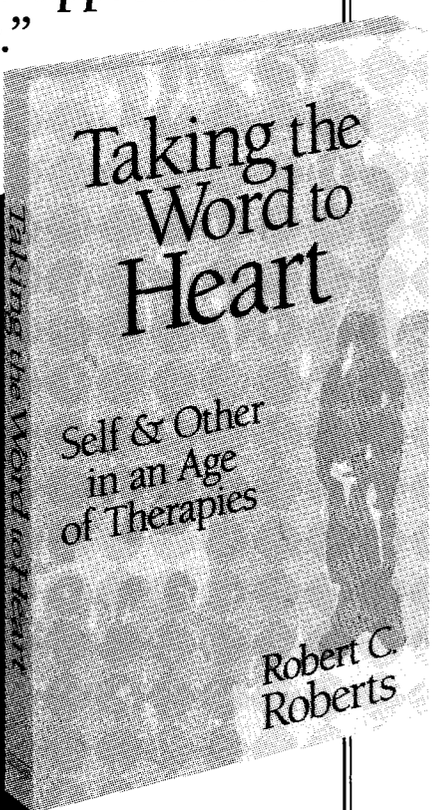

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hood, in the body and blood."

Rather than waste more words arguing the pros and cons of just-war theory, common sense tells me our energy would be better spent denouncing the government's intention to invest more billions in weapons of high-tech mass destruction—and the worldwide trade in them—so urgently described in the lead editorial of the same issue.

ANNE MORRIS

Apples & kumquats

Gridley, Calif.

To the Editors: In "You Can't Keep a Good Theory Down," Stephen J. Pope asserts that "[p]oorly reasoned moral arguments are counterproductive." Mr. Pope provides the best example of his own thesis in his critique of *La Civiltà Cattolica's* editorial on war.

The article attempts to blunt the editorial's claim that all modern wars are total by enlisting the examples of the U.S. deployment in Somalia and the recent targeting of Iraqi air defense installations. From the limited character of these interventions, he concludes that the editorial's basic assumption about the totality of modern warfare is false.

This is to compare apples with oranges, skirmishes with massacres. Only by stretching the meaning of words can the incidents cited be considered "warfare."

If proponents of just-war theory must find support in such arguments, perhaps it is time to discard the theory.

MARK E. CHAMBERS

Ill tidings from Rome

Saskatoon, Sask., Canada

To the Editors: May an Anglican say a word of thanks for John Nilson's "A Glitch or a Gulf?: Canterbury, Rome, & Reunion" [February 26]? Ever since *Apostolicae curae* in 1896, Anglicans have been accustomed to ill tidings arriving in the mail from Rome. Pope Pius XI published *Casti connubii* in 1930 almost certainly in reaction to the Lambeth Conference's recognition that the issue of regulating the number of children a couple should have was properly the decision of the couple. Pope Paul VI published *Humanae vitae* in the middle of the 1968 Lambeth Conference. And now the Vatican seems well launched, beginning with the March 5 issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*, on a campaign to demonstrate the impossibility of ordaining women.

I would quarrel with Nilson on one point only: his reference to the "narrow margin" by which the Church of England voted to endorse the ordination of women as presbyters. Under General Synod regulations, a two-thirds majority was required in each of the three orders in Synod: laity, clergy, and bishops; in the event, the requirement was met and surpassed in all three. One may dispute whether a two-thirds majority represents a sufficient consensus; by no means can it be considered a "narrow margin."

(THE REV. CANON) JOHN M. FLYNN

The writer is professor of theology and Anglican studies at the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad in Saskatoon.

Revisionism revisited

Naples, N.Y.

To the Editors: While it pains my *Commonweal*-nurtured ecumenical spirit to take partisan issue with the review of a daring Roman Catholic revisionist approach to English church history [Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*, reviewed by Edward T. Oakes, S.J., March 12], still I must put three points to the reviewer, though I have not read the book.

1. As the context of Shakespeare's line about "bare ruined choirs" is a poem about *aging* ("Sonnet 73"), all three quatrains offer images which embody the theme: (a) autumn/leaf-fall; (b) sunset/ sleep; (c) dying fire/ashes. Yes, *behind* the metaphoric ruined choirs may lurk real derelict churches, but that does not necessarily make the poet either Roman Catholic or Church of England. Thus, to invest the poignant nostalgia of the line with *primary* religious meaning is to overload it, and so to distort the poem. As to Professor Philip

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Edwards's quoted assertion that if the line is not about despoiled churches, then "poetry is a mere rhapsody of words," I think he stakes far too much on an all-or-nothing gamble—especially as he begins his argument, "If that line, *in context* [emphasis mine] does not...." You have Dante and Mozart; I won't concede Gentle Will without a fight.

2. Oakes refers to the final Elizabethan settlement as occurring "under the Cranmer thumb," when Cranmer had already been burnt at the stake under Elizabeth's predecessor, her half-sister Mary Tudor. Maybe that thumb is only metaphoric, like those choirs?

3. Finally, if Duffy's thesis as presented by the reviewer is true, how come almost the entire Convocation—goaded by the Parliament, to be sure—went along with Henry? It may have been passivity for the most part, but no monarch, even aided by such a scoundrel as Thomas Cromwell, could coerce so many so fast entirely against their will. The thinly populated North may have been against the breach with Rome, but the City of London and the rest of the more heavily populated South and East certainly were not. And, while the subject should not be treated quantitatively, still, heinous as their executions were, Fisher and More hardly add up to the victims of the Smithfield fires.

The review reminds me a bit of a lecture on the English Recusants I heard at Dunwoodie seminary in the 1950s. The lecturer, a renowned historian, managed to get from 1558 to 1603 without once mentioning Elizabeth's remarkable clemency after the Northern Rising of 1569, nor the hardening effect of her excommunication (1570), and of subsequent Jesuit incursions from abroad, on her tolerance of the Latin faith of loyal subjects up to then. He never touched on the Queen's reluctance to dispatch her house-arrested cousin Mary Stuart in 1578, even in the face of all the regicidal plots hatched by or around Mary. Nor did he once mention the connections, political, military, and financial, between the Vatican and Philip II, nor even the Armada itself!

Revision is all very well, but the review makes Eamon Duffy's sound less than even-handed. (THE REV.) SHELDON FLORY

Alleva on 'Crying'

Wilmington, Del.

To the Editors: I was overjoyed at Richard Alleva's aptly titled review of *The Crying Game* ["The Obligations of Love," February 26]. In an age that sings of, writes about, and stereotypes love in every conceivable way, writer-director Neil Jordan gives us a story that deals with the real thing. I am reminded by Fergus, the film's Everyman, of Paul's letter to the Galatians, where he tells the community of faith, "Gone is the distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female—you are all one in Christ Jesus." Fergus, at once comic and tragic, reminds me too of modern man, searching for love when he is in its very midst. This film convincingly depicts love for others as a universal reality. Refreshing, indeed. JOAN ROBINSON-HOLMES

'Strident' on abortion

Rolling Meadows, Ill.

To the Editors: I am renewing my subscription after much soul searching. The most important reason for my doubt was your treatment of the abortion issue in the context of the recent presidential campaign.

Abortion is an important moral and po-

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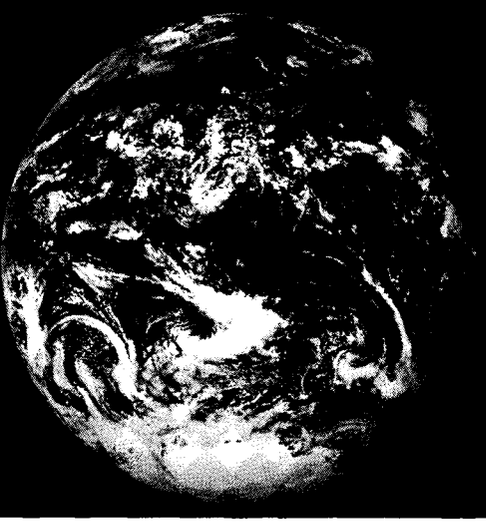

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litical issue on which you have every right to explain your position and argue for it. Over the past few years, I thought you had done a good job of presenting your position, particularly in the context of other prolife issues such as fostering pre- and postnatal care, adoption, an economy that makes it more probable that parents can support the children they conceive, financially, emotionally, and spiritually.

But, beginning with David Carlin's column following the Democratic convention [August 14, 1992], and in several editorials leading up to the election, *Commonweal* became a more strident voice that relied on personal attacks on those who contend that a pregnant woman should be the one who makes the moral judgment and choice whether to carry a pregnancy to term. The column and the later editorials attacked the intellectual capacity, integrity, and moral character of those in the Democratic party who believe that this important decision belongs with the pregnant woman and not the government.

In my view, abortion is a complex decision that is morally right or wrong depending on many factors in each situation. I believe that is what most Americans believe as well. I do not believe that in holding this view I am intellectually fooling myself, nor do I accept that all women who choose abortion do so because they are unwilling to accept the consequences of their actions, or are too weak and lazy to live with the inconvenience of an unwanted pregnancy.

At the same time, I strongly support the Democratic party's attempt to change the socioeconomic environment in this country, a policy that in my opinion could make it less likely that pregnant women will choose abortion. The Democratic candidate won this election because he recognized that the main issue was the economy, not abortion, race relations, "family values," patriotism, or other issues. I commend him for staying focused on the issue most important to the electorate, and I hope and pray that he will follow through with bold economic plans that could bring greater equity and more economic support for the large majority of Americans, including pregnant women.

ROBERT BEEZAT

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